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TO: Walton County Board of County Commissioners;
c/o Clay Atkinson, County Attorney; Brian Kellenberger, County Administrator

FROM: Dave Roberts, Florida Managing Partner; Alexis R. Gay, Associate Attorney
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SUBJECT: **INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**
COMPLAINTS MADE BY COMMISSIONER DAN CURRY AGAINST CODE COMPLIANCE DEPARTMENT, AND COMPLAINTS MADE BY COUNTY EMPLOYEES AGAINST COMMISSIONER CURRY

DATE: May 18, 2026

I. INTRODUCTION

Hall, Gilligan, Roberts & Shanlever, LLP ("HGRS") is a law firm maintaining offices in Georgia and Florida, including in Walton County, that largely focuses its practice on employment law and related matters. HGRS, by and through its Florida Managing Partner, Dave Roberts, has been retained by the Walton County Board of County Commissioners ("BCC") to conduct independent investigations regarding various matters associated with the County's operations. HGRS has also been tasked with providing legal analysis, opinions, and recommendations related to the requested investigations (collectively, the "Services").

The instant and above-referenced investigation (the "Investigation") arose in the context of Complaints between and among Commissioner Dan Curry ("Commissioner Curry"), the Code Compliance Department ("Code") and various Walton County (the "County") employees. Commissioner Curry initially made complaints regarding Code which led to a request by the County for HGRS to investigate the same. However, throughout this Investigation, various County employees have raised complaints against Commissioner Curry concerning related subject matter and HGRS was requested to investigate such complaints as well, significantly expanding the scope of the Investigation. All relevant and material facts and circumstances presented to HGRS in the course of the Investigation are set forth in detail herein.

A brief explanation of the format of this report (the "Report") may be helpful to assist the reader in navigating its contents. This Report is organized into distinct sections, starting with the

relevant information necessary to provide the background and contextual framework for the issues presented in this Investigation, followed by an explanation of the Scope of Work, and a detailed timeline summary of relevant events. Next, the Report details the investigation process including documents and applicable laws and policies reviewed, and a summary of information obtained through witness interviews. Finally, the Report concludes with a detailed analysis of the determinations made and recommendations based on such determinations.

II. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION

A. Commissioner Curry's December 20, 2025 Complaint

On December 22, 2025, Assistant County Attorney Frankie White contacted the undersigned for Services at the request of Walton County Administrator, Brian Kellenberger, ("Mr. Kellenberger") regarding a complaint made by Commissioner Curry on December 20, 2025 (Commissioner Curry's "12/20/2025 Curry Complaint"). In the 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint, Commissioner Curry alleged that Code selectively enforced Land Development Code (the "LDC") violations directed at his and his wife's, Tammy Curry ("Ms. Curry")(collectively, the "Currys") personal residence (the "Currys' Property"), and alleged that Code colluded with the Currys' neighbor, Joseph Copeland (Mr. Copeland"), to initiate a Code case at the Currys' Property. Commissioner Curry also alleged that Code's policies were broken when a Code Officer shut off his body camera footage during a presumptively related conversation with Mr. Copeland and his wife, Brianna Copeland ("Ms. Copeland") (collectively, the "Copelands"). Commissioner Curry alleged his Code complaints against the Copelands (as described in detail herein below) were improperly not treated as anonymous because of environmental and public safety reasons, and that if policy had been followed, no one would have known who made the complaints against the Copelands. *See* **Ex. 1**.

Commissioner Curry brought the 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint to the County Attorney's Office ("Legal") and the Code and Human Resources ("HR") Departments following a Walton County Zoning Board of Adjustments ("ZBA") quasi-judicial hearing[1] held on December 15, 2025. This ZBA hearing concerned a variance application (VAR25-000034) submitted by Commissioner Curry in his unofficial, individual capacity to the Planning and Development Services Department ("Planning") on October 17, 2025 (the "Curry Variance Application"). *See* **Exs. 2, 22**. The Curry Variance Application was submitted after Code identified certain LDC violations at the Currys' Property reported by the Copelands who live across the street from the Currys. Commissioner Curry attended the December 15, 2025 ZBA hearing to request variances for the Currys' driveways and a storage shed located at the Currys' Property. During the December 15, 2025 ZBA hearing, Mr. Copeland provided testimony under oath in opposition to the Curry Variance Application.

[1] A quasi-judicial hearing is a formal, court-like proceeding conducted by a government agency, board, or commission—rather than a court of law—to apply existing policies or laws to specific individuals or properties. Such hearings normally require sworn testimony, evidence, and cross-examination, culminating in a decision based on the record, commonly used for land use decisions, zoning variances, or special exceptions.

Commissioner Curry contends that Mr. Copeland's testimony suggested that Code told or encouraged Mr. Copeland to make a complaint against the Currys' Property. Specifically, Mr. Copeland testified:

> Because Code Compliance found it [LDC violations at the Currys' Property] and they first noted this in 2022 of June was first when this was noted. Then we brought it back up because Code Compliance told us to do this because of other things happening so therefore we made an official Code Compliance case again on this. And this isn't just us saying this, this is multiple different people telling us about these Code violations and then telling us that this is the route that you need to do. So that's what we've done.

See ZBA hearing footage[2] at 38:45 - 39:16.

Commissioner Curry has requested that Code be investigated to determine: (1) if Code encouraged or otherwise instructed the Copelands to file a complaint against Commissioner Curry and, (2) if Code selectively enforced LDC violations at his property. *See* **Ex. 1**. Commissioner Curry indeed alleges that Code selectively enforced LDC violations at his residence and has specifically identified to HGRS[3] at least eleven (11) properties in his neighborhood that he contends have LDC violations similar to those identified by Code at the Currys' Property. Commissioner Curry contends Code has willfully ignored these alleged LDC violations while selectively enforcing LDC violations at the Currys' Property. *See* **Ex. 1**.

As detailed in the following, while Mr. Copeland's testimony at the ZBA hearing may have initiated the 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint, the facts and circumstances which prompted this Investigation actually originated in or around June 2025 as a dispute between two neighboring homeowners – the Currys and the Copelands.

B. Events Predating the 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint and the Dispute Between the Currys and the Copelands

1. The Copeland Code Case

The heart of this matter stems from a personal, civil dispute between the Currys and the Copelands, whose properties are situated on opposite sides of Waterview Cove Drive in Freeport, Florida. On June 2, 2025, Commissioner Curry[4] called Director of Code, Tony Cornman ("Mr. Cornman"), to discuss a complaint regarding the Copelands' personal residence located at 599 Waterview Cove Drive, Freeport Florida (the "Copelands' Property"). Specifically, Commissioner

[2] https://www.youtube.com/live/9zyCqrZgCQE?si=NdtSsVyBh0tPgpmU

[3] Commissioner Curry did not identify these properties to Code during the Curry Code Case, as detailed herein below.

[4] Commissioner Curry was elected and sworn in to his first term on the BCC in November 2024 and has served in that role continuously to date.

Curry informed Mr. Cornman that the Copelands had installed a water pump in a wetland protection zone[5] (colloquially referred to as a "wetland buffer" or "preservation setback") on the Copelands' Property. Commissioner Curry maintains that he only reported this to Mr. Cornman after several neighbors came to him with concerns, and as a Commissioner, he felt he needed to inform Code. Although Commissioner Curry did not specifically request for this complaint to be anonymous, Mr. Cornman, on behalf of Code, determined that because the complaint involved a wetland protection zone, the complaint could be anonymous pursuant to Florida Statute § 162.02[6]. *See* **Ex. 7**, § 162.02, *Fla. Stat*. Accordingly, no complainant is listed on Code Case Detailed Activity Report CE-25-01499 related to the Copelands' Property (the "Copeland Code Case"). *See* **Ex. 5**. After working with Planning, Code determined there were no identifiable issues in the wetland protection zone at the Copelands' Property that would constitute a LDC violation. *See* **Ex. 5**.

On June 13, 2025, Commissioner Curry made additional complaints about the Copelands' Property to Mr. Cornman via text regarding a, "crapoer [sic] in the road, dumpster in the road and a trailer with no tags in the road." *See* **Ex. 14**. Commissioner Curry contacted Mr. Cornman about these complaints again via text and email on Sunday, June 15, 2025 (Father's Day), also reporting a dumpster placed in front of a fire hydrant and a mound of dirt left unattended in the roadway. *See* **Ex. 14**. That same day, the Code Officer on weekend duty[7], Darnell Bennett ("Mr. Bennett"), visited the Copelands' Property and confirmed a "dump trailer and porta potty" were in the road and issued a Notice of Removal to the Copelands. *See* **Ex. 5**. Drew Galloway ("Mr. Galloway"), the Code Officer assigned[8] to the Copeland Code Case, visited the Copelands' Property the next day and noted the trailer and portable toilet had been moved, resulting in no LDC violation. *See* **Ex. 5**. Between June 16, 2025, and June 27, 2025, Commissioner Curry continued to make complaints to Mr. Cornman via text message regarding the Copelands' Property, including complaints about the Copelands' trailer and an unpermitted water well. It was ultimately determined that the Copelands had a permit for their water well, and Copeland Code Case was closed on June 30, 2025. No LDC violations were issued to the Copelands because they cured any issued Notice of Violation(s) within the allotted timeframe. *See* **Ex. 5**.

Throughout these events, Commissioner Curry maintains he never filed an official Code complaint against the Copelands, and instead merely relayed concerns of his neighbors regarding the issues to Mr. Cornman. *See e.g.*, **Ex. 1**, pg. 18.

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[5] *See* Walton County Land Development Code § 4.01.01 ("The purpose of the creation of a wetlands protection zone is to preserve the value and function of existing wetland systems in the County as animal and plant habitat, as natural flood storage areas and as buffers between surface water bodies and activities on adjacent uplands.")

[6] Florida Statue § 162.02 prohibits anonymous Code complaints unless, "the code inspector has reason to believe that the violation presents an imminent threat to public health, safety, or welfare or imminent destruction of habitat or sensitive resources." *See* § 162.02, *Fla. Stat*.

[7] Code Officers are assigned to weekend duty on a rotational basis.

[8] Code Officers are assigned to cases on a rotational basis.

2. The Curry Code Case and Curry Variance Application

Even after the Copeland Code Case was officially closed, the dispute between the Currys and the Copelands continued, including when the Walton County Sheriff's Department ("WCSO") was called to the properties on August 30, 2025 during a heated exchange between Commissioner Curry and Mr. Copeland. *See* **Ex. 66**; **Aud. Exs. A, B**; **Vid. Exs. L, S, T**. On August 31, 2025, the Currys and the Copelands issued no-trespass warnings against each other and their family members through the WCSO. *See* **Ex. 66**; **Vid. Ex. U**.

On August 27, 2025, the Copelands filed a Code complaint against the Currys' Property, detailed in Code Case Activity Report CE-25-01709 (the "Curry Code Case"). *See* **Ex. 4**. The Copelands specifically complained about rebar located in the row easement (the "Rebar") and a storage shed improperly located in the setback[9] on the Currys' property (the "Shed"). On August 28, 2025, Code Officer Uriel Baza ("Mr. Baza"), the Code Officer assigned to the Curry Code Case, investigated the Currys' Property. After observing the reported Rebar and Shed and determining those conditions were non-compliant with the LDC, Code issued the Currys a Notice of Violation. The Notice of Violation was hand-delivered to Commissioner Curry at his office in Freeport on August 28, 2025. While at the Currys' Property on August 28, 2025, Mr. Baza also observed a horseshoe shaped driveway in addition to the original driveway (the "Driveway(s)"). Mr. Baza noted the Driveways may exceed the County's driveway footage allowance for residential properties. On September 10, 2025, the Curry Code Case was updated to confirm the Driveways exceed the 20-foot allowance[10], thus not in compliance with the LDC. *See* **Ex. 4**. The Rebar was eventually removed and therefore no LDC violation was issued, however the Shed and Driveways were determined to be LDC violations.

As a result of the LDC violations, the Currys submitted the Curry Variance Application[11] for the Shed and Driveways. *See* **Ex. 2**. The Currys were originally given a September 29, 2025 deadline to bring the Shed and Driveways into compliance with the LDC, but that deadline was extended three (3) times due to the length of the variance process and due to certain questions that arose regarding County maintained roads. On September 23, 2025, Commissioner Curry and Planning employee, Senior Planner Robert Baronti ("Mr. Baronti"), held a pre-application meeting for the Curry Variance Application. The Curry Variance Application was submitted on October 17, 2025, and was processed by Planning and deemed completed on October 20, 2025. The Curry Variance Application was originally set to be heard at the November 17, 2025 ZBA hearing, but Commissioner Curry requested a continuance to December 15, 2025.

[9] *See* LDC § 5.00.03 titled, "Building Setback Requirements."

[10] *See* LDC § 5.04.04(B)(5) (""Single family residential driveways shall be limited to a maximum of 20 feet in width when connecting to a County maintained roadway. Dual one-way access is permitted provided the combined width of the connections do not exceed 20 feet.")

[11] A variance, as it pertains to the LDC, is an allowance to depart from the regulatory language contained in the LDC; https://www.mywaltonfl.gov/483/VariancesAppeals.

Prior to the December 15, 2025 ZBA hearing, Planning issued its Staff Report regarding the Curry Variance Application. *See* **Ex. 2**, pgs. 3-8. The Planning Staff found, in pertinent part, that, "[u]nless other evidence is presented to the contrary, the requested variance does not appear to satisfy the minimum requirements of Section 1.16.03[12] of the Land Development Code." *See* **Ex. 2**, pgs. 3-8. Despite Planning's findings, the ZBA, upon a 5 to 2 vote during the ZBA hearing, ultimately granted the Currys a variance from the LDC, including:

- A variance from LDC § 5.04.04(B)(5) to allow for an already constructed circular driveway on Waterview Cove Drive and a single driveway on Oakplace Road allowing two points of access on the property to remain; a variance for the circular driveway connections on Waterview Cove Drive to exceed the 20-foot in total width limitation, when the current connections are of 19 +/- feet and 14 +/- feet (total of 33 feet) varying the limitation by 13-feet.

- A variance from LDC § 5.00.03 to reduce the front yard setback along Oakplace Road from 20 feet to 16 feet; and to reduce the rear yard setback 15 feet to 10 feet to retain a portable shed in its current location.

(collectively, the "Granted Curry Variance"). *See* **Ex. 33**. In connection with the Granted Curry Variance, Commissioner Curry agreed to: (1) remove the Shed if the Currys' ever sold their property; (2) tie down the Shed; and (3) add trees in the side setback along Oakplace Road to screen the shed from public view, unless trees were already planted that screen the Shed. The Currys also voluntarily agreed to use the horseshoe/circular Driveway on Waterview Cove Drive for "one-way" traffic use – in other words, to ingress only on one side and egress only on the other[13].

As noted herein above, Mr. Copeland testified in opposition to the Curry Variance Application at the December 15, 2025 ZBA hearing. Specifically, Mr. Copeland argued: (1) there were issues with the notice for the requested variance; (2) the Shed location was a self-created hardship; (3) there was nothing unique to require a variance for the Shed; (4) there were safety concerns related to the Driveways due to visual issues with the circular driveway and accidents that had occurred in the neighborhood; and (5) the Driveways were a self-created hardship. During the hearing, Mr. Copeland testified that he filed a Code complaint against Commissioner Curry.

[12] *See* LDC § 1.16.00 titled, "Variances" and § 1.16.03 titled, "Standards and Procedures."

[13] While the ZBA attempted to require the horseshoe driveway to be limited to one-way traffic, the ZBA's attorney noted that would not an enforceable condition.

On December 16, 2025, Deputy Planning Director Kelly Schultz ("Ms. Schultz") informed Code about the Granted Curry Variance via email and noted the requirement for the Currys to submit a Building Permit Review[14] application ("BPR")[15] for their Shed. In response, Code informed Ms. Schultz that Planning would need to communicate with Commissioner Curry regarding the BPR process. *See* **Ex. 4**, pg. 12-14.

On December 20, 2025, after obtaining the Granted Variance on December 15, 2025, Commissioner Curry made his 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint alleging that Code selectively enforced the LDC violations at his property (the Shed and the Driveways) while ignoring other neighboring properties with similar LDC violations, and alleged that Code was involved in or even encouraged the Copelands to file the complaint against the Currys' Property. *See* **Ex. 1**.

On December 22, 2025, Mr. Copeland notified County Administration ("Administration") and the BCC via email that he would be filing a Petition for Writ of Certiorari regarding the ZBA's decision on the Granted Curry Variance. Also on December 22, 2025, Mr. Copeland emailed Ms. Schultz and Legal his Notice of Intent to Appeal and Demand Stay for the Granted Curry Variance. *See* **Ex. 22**, pgs. 301-302; 307-308.

On January 13, 2026, ZBA Chairman Joe Johnson ("Mr. Johnson") signed the Granted Curry Variance, and on January 14, 2026, the Granted Variance was filed with the Walton County Clerk of Court. *See* **Ex. 33**.

On January 27, 2026, the Currys provided Code with photos confirming the Shed had been moved in accordance with the Granted Curry Variance. On January 28, 2026, Commissioner Curry applied for a BPR and paid the associated $100.00 fee (BPR26-000202). On January 29, 2026, Planning Technician Stephanie Clark-Kruger ("Ms. Clark Kruger") informed Mr. Baza that Planning approved Commissioner Curry's BPR but was waiting on Commissioner Curry to provide an As Built survey ("As Built Survey") to verify the new location of the Shed. *See* **Ex. 4**, pg. 4.

On February 5, 2026, Mr. Copeland filed a Petition for Writ of Certiorari in the Circuit Court of the First Judicial Circuit in and For Walton County, Florida (the "Circuit Court") regarding the ZBA's decision on the Granted Curry Variance ("Mr. Copeland's Petition"). *See* **Ex. 37**. The Circuit Court has not yet issued a determination on Mr. Copeland's Petition.

On March 18, 2026, in an email to Mr. Cornman and Director of Planning Stephen Schoen ("Mr. Schoen"), Mr. Kellenberger determined that because of the location of the Currys' Property north of the Choctawhatchee Bay, and because the Shed is less than four hundred (400) square feet, a BPR is not required, and Commissioner Curry should be issued a refund for the $100.00 BPR application fee. In response, Mr. Schoen stated the BPR application would be closed, and a

[14] Interchangeably referred to by County employees as "Floodplain Review;" "BPR process'" "BPR application;" and/or "Building Permit and Flood Plain Review."

[15] The LDC contains requirements for parking, storm water management, preservation and natural resource protection, floodplain management, parking and setbacks, etc. that must be met during the planning review process; https://www.mywaltonfl.gov/1085/Building-Permit-Review.

refund would be issued. *See* **Ex. 22**, pgs. 488-493. Also on March 18, 2026, Mr. Cornman emailed Mr. Kellenberger, Mr. Schoen, and Commissioner Curry to confirm Code had what was needed to close the Curry Code Case. *See* **Ex. 22**, pg. 509. The Curry Code Case was officially closed on March 18, 2026. *See* **Ex. 4**.

3. Commissioner Curry's Complaints Regarding Code Officer Body Camera Footage

During the pendency of the Curry Code Case, Commissioner Curry reviewed public records related to both his property and the Copeland Code Case. On September 1, 2025, via email, Commissioner Curry requested a copy of all body camera footage[16] of any interactions between Code Officers and the Copelands. *See* **Ex. 26**, pg. 24. On September 3, 2025, Commissioner Curry emailed Mr. Cornman, Legal and Mr. Kellenberger regarding Mr. Galloway's file footage 25-01499 taken on June 16, 2025 at the Copelands' Property and expressed concerns about the video footage being cut off in the middle of the interaction. *See* **Ex. 26**, pg. 20.

Specifically, on June 16, 2025, Mr. Galloway spoke with the Copelands at their property regarding one of the reported LDC violations related to the Copeland Code Case raised by Commissioner Curry. *See* **Vid. Ex. A**. The majority of the interaction was captured by body camera video footage pursuant to Code Policy 03-02, however towards the end of the video, Mr. Galloway specifically references the Copelands' "neighbor" complaining about the portable toilet (presumedly, Commissioner Curry) and appears to motion to the Copelands to stop speaking. *See* **Vid. Ex. A**. Mr. Galloway then turned his body camera off, ending the video completely. After Commissioner Curry's September 3, 2025 complaint, on September 4, 2025, Mr. Cornman informed Commissioner Curry via email that Mr. Galloway did not follow established Code policy and directives, and the situation was being addressed internally within Code. *See* **Ex. 26**, pgs. 19-20.

In response, Code and HR conducted an investigation into Mr. Galloway's body camera footage and determined Mr. Galloway violated Code Policy 2.14, Cessation of Recording, by turning the video footage off in the middle of the interaction with the Copelands. Accordingly, on September 4, 2025, HR issued Mr. Galloway a Written Reprimand ("Mr. Galloway's Initial Written Reprimand") for this violation. *See* **Ex. 10**. Mr. Galloway opted to submit a written comment to HR in response to the Initial Written Reprimand ("Mr. Galloway's Written Comment"). *See* **Ex. 12**, pg. 4. In Mr. Galloway's Written Comment, he claimed the reason for the cessation of recording was due to the battery on his body camera dying. Mr. Galloway's Written Comment states that the interaction with the Copelands was interrupted due to a camera failure for weak battery, and the hand motion he made was due to his attention turning to the device, which was signaling a power failure. Mr. Galloway's Written Comment denies intentionally halting the recording. *See* **Ex. 12**, pg. 4.

[16] Pursuant to Code Policy Number 03-02 entitled "Body Worn Cameras (MAV)," all Code Officers are equipped with Mobile Audio/Video ("MAV" or "body camera") recording systems to provide records of events and to assist Code Officers in the performance of their duties. §2.14 of Code Policy 03-02 requires Code Officers to leave their body camera on until an incident has concluded or until the Code Officer has left the scene.

After reviewing Mr. Galloway's Written Comment, Code investigated the situation further and instructed a Code Operations Support Specialist to run a report of Mr. Galloway's body camera (the "MAV Report"). *See* **Ex. 11**. The MAV Report indicated that the body camera in fact did not lose battery or power during the interaction, but the recording function had been manually stopped while the MAV's camera itself remained powered for several additional minutes. *See* **Ex. 11**. On September 16, 2025, HR, Mr. Cornman and Deputy Director of Code Michael Gainey ("Mr. Gainey") met with Mr. Galloway to discuss the MAV Report and address the inconsistencies in Mr. Galloway's Written Comment. During the meeting, Mr. Galloway declined to provide additional details and maintained he believed the body camera had powered off. *See* **Ex. 12**, pg. 5.

On September 16, 2025, Commissioner Curry made another complaint to Mr. Cornman via email with the subject line "Georgina." *See* **Ex. 1**, pgs. 19-20. In this email, Commissioner Curry suggested that two (2) Code Officers informed the Copelands he was the complainant in the Copeland Code Case, and specifically that Code Compliance Supervisor Georgina Hicks ("Ms. Hicks") allegedly disclosed Commissioner Curry's identity (in addition to the alleged prior disclosure by Mr. Galloway). *See* **Ex. 1**, pgs. 19-20. However, in the video footage from Ms. Hicks' June 26, 2025 visit to the Copelands' Property, Mr. Copeland, not Ms. Hicks, specifically identifies Commissioner Curry as the complainant related to the Copelands' trailer. *See* **Vid. Ex. B**.

On September 22, 2025, Mr. Galloway was issued a Notice of Pre-Disciplinary Hearing, notifying Mr. Galloway that he violated Policies 2.1 and 10.2 (as a result of including untruthful information in Mr. Galloway's Written Statement) and that a hearing would be held on September 24, 2025. *See* **Ex. 12**, pg. 6. On September 24, 2025, before the Pre-Disciplinary Hearing was conducted, Mr. Galloway submitted a letter of resignation and voluntarily terminated his employment with the County. *See* **Ex. 12**, pg. 7.

In October 2025, HR Employee Relations Manager Breezy Adkinson ("Ms. Adkinson") conducted an investigation into Commissioner Curry's allegations that Code Officers improperly disclosed him as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case. After conducting her investigation, Ms. Adkinson determined that Ms. Hicks did not disclose Commissioner Curry's identity, and that it was actually the Copelands who referenced Commissioner Curry by name in interactions with Code Officers. *See* **Ex. 13**.

Commissioner Curry has alleged that Code employees disclosing him as the complainant in the Copeland Code Case was improper and further resulted in the Copelands filing a complaint against him. The circumstances related to Mr. Galloway and the body camera footage are additional reasons Commissioner Curry cited to in the 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint as to why he believes Code has selectively enforced LDC violations at his property and/or were improperly involved with the Copelands' complaint against him.

C. Commissioner Curry's Complaints Against the County Regarding County Property

In addition to his 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint, Commissioner Curry has identified certain structures on County-owned property that he contends are in violation of the LDC. *See* **Ex. 19**. In early February 2026 (after the initiation of this Investigation), Commissioner Curry began to

publicly criticize the County on his personal and official[17] Facebook pages alleging that the County, and more specifically Code, does not follow its own policies. *See* **Exs. 40- 44; 48-51**. Specifically, Commissioner Curry identified certain accessory structures including sheds and storage structures on County-owned properties he contends are not in compliance with LDC. The County-owned properties identified by Commissioner Curry include, but are not necessarily limited to, the Code Office at the South Walton Annex Building, the Beach Operations facility in South Walton, and Helen McCall Park in South Walton. Commissioner Curry raised concerns regarding BPR, pre-planning applications, payment on applications, and As Built Surveys, and contends the County has not abided by its own processes and policies in placing these structures on its properties. Commissioner Curry also expressed this opinion via email on February 9, 2026 to Administration and Legal stating he has "ZERO faith" in Code. *See* **Ex. 19**, pgs. 1-2. In this email, Commissioner Curry also stated he had several citizens scheduling appointments with him to discuss their concerns with Code. On February 4, 2026, Commissioner Curry submitted a public records request for a copy of all As Built Surveys that pertain to County-owned properties from the time the LDC was implemented to present, including all "pre plan applications" and "BPR sign odds for any structures on county owned property." *See* **Ex. 19**, pg. 20. Planning processed this request, which took considerable time considering County owns hundreds of parcels of land[18].

D. Commissioner Curry's Complaints Against Code Salaries and Vehicles

After this Investigation began, in and around March and April 2026, Commissioner Curry asked Administration and HR for information regarding Code vehicles and other specific information related to Code including the number of employees in Code, and information regarding salaries and pay. In an email dated March 31, 2026 with a subject line "Code concerns," Commissioner Curry stated:

> Why are there more code vehicles in the parking lot at the Freeport complex during the day than at night? I'm assuming, we have a lot of folks taking these cars home, so has there been an audit of this process?, if not why? I have folks calling me and asking me why do they see code vehicles driving around at night in locations north of the bay, great question, why?

See **Ex. 20**, pg. 9.

[17] Commissioner Curry's public Facebook page is titled "Friends of Dan Curry D1 commissioner"; https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100078152118071. Commissioner Curry frequently posts on the Friends of Dan Curry D1 commissioner as well as his personal profile which is https://www.facebook.com/dan.curry.5220.

[18] On May 15, 2026, Mr. Schoen informed HGRS that Planning provided Commissioner Curry with all of the documents and information he asked for.

Also on March 31, 2026, Commissioner Curry sent an email with the subject line "Internal Audit / records request" stating, in pertinent part:

> …I see a lot of vehicles driving around after hours and on weekends… So, it appears half of the codes dept fleet is on this program with the following as the reason. 19 or 20 officers… As I've been told before we only have 2 or 3 code officers on a second shift which is at the south end, so why do I see so many out and about after hours driving around in other areas?

See **Ex. 20**, pg. 20. On April 19, 2026, Commissioner Curry made a Facebook post about Code vehicles and referenced, "driveway measuring." *See* **Ex. 57**. Commissioner Curry raised these concerns again in another email dated April 2, 2026. *See* **Ex. 20**, pg. 7. On April 29, 2026, Commissioner Curry posted a spreadsheet on Facebook titled, "Codes Comparisons" which seemingly compares the County's Code information to other counties in Florida. *See* **Ex. 63**. On April 30, 2026, Commissioner Curry made a public records request for, "all the salaries / hourly pay for the codes dept to continue with my budget comparison exercise." *See* **Ex. 61**.

Code employees have alleged that Commissioner Curry is targeting Code and requesting this information in retaliation for finding LDC violations at the Currys' Property and/or for filing Ethics Complaints against him, as detailed below.

E. <u>County Employees' Complaints Against Commissioner Curry</u>

Throughout the majority of the course of this Investigation, HGRS was made aware of complaints made by County employees against Commissioner Curry specifically related to Commissioner Curry's actions taken after he obtained the Granted Curry Variance. Specifically, beginning in early January 2026, several County employees made complaints to HR and Administration that Commissioner Curry's 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint, among other actions taken by Commissioner Curry including, but not limited to, posts on his Facebook pages, were in retaliation by Commissioner Curry against Code for Code issuing LDC violations at the Currys' Property. Some of the County employees' complaints became known through the interview process of this Investigation but became a larger part of this Investigation in March 2026 when HGRS learned that Mr. Cornman and Mr. Gainey had filed ethics complaints with the State of Florida Commission on Ethics ("the Ethics Commission")[19] against Commissioner Curry (collectively, the

[19] The Ethics Commission was enabled pursuant to Florida Statutes §§112.320 and 112.321, and is governed by Article II, Section 8 of the Florida Constitution, which authorizes the Ethics Commission to investigate complaints alleging breach of the public trust by public officers and employees. The Ethics Commission also has the authority to investigate complaints alleging possible violations of the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees (§§112.322 and 112.324, *Fla. Stat*.)
https://ethics.state.fl.us/documents/ethics/statement%20of%20org.pdf?cp=2026422.

"Ethics Complaints")[20] in or around January and February 2026. *See* **Exs. 23, 24**. Furthermore, on March 7, 2026, Mr. Cornman emailed Administration and specifically requested that his complaints against Commissioner Curry regarding alleged retaliatory conduct towards Code be included as part of this Investigation. *See* **Ex. 23**, pg. 4.

1. Mr. Cornman's Ethics Complaint and Subsequent Complaints

Mr. Cornman filed his Ethics Complaint against Commissioner Curry on January 8, 2026 and submitted an addendum to his Ethics Complaint on February 9, 2026. *See* **Ex. 23**. Mr. Cornman also raised complaints regarding Commissioner Curry during his February 12, 2026 interview with HGRS discussed in detail below. On March 7, 2026 Mr. Cornman requested for the concerns raised in his Ethics Complaints be included as part of this Investigation. *See* **Ex. 23**, pg. 4.

In Mr. Cornman's Ethics Complaint, he detailed the events leading up to Commissioner Curry's 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint. The following is a summary of the assertions made by Mr. Cornman in his Ethics Complaint dated January 8, 2026:

- Commissioner Curry submitted multiple complaints against the Copelands, and although Commissioner Curry did not request anonymity, the complaints were processed by Code anonymously due to their stated focus on possible safety or environmental concerns. Commissioner Curry's complaints were made directly to Mr. Cornman by Commissioner Curry through phone calls and text messages, and it was Mr. Cornman's decision to treat the complaints as anonymous as a professional courtesy to Commissioner Curry.

- Around the same time, Code opened and handled a Code case at the Currys' Property after receiving a complaint from the Copelands. The Curry Code Case resulted in documented LDC violations, and Commissioner Curry applied for and received a partial variance to resolve the LDC violations.

- After Commissioner Curry's LDC violations were partially resolved, Commissioner Curry began requesting investigations into Code operations and repeatedly raised concerns about a past body camera incident that had already been reviewed and resolved by the County disciplinary process, and even after that employee (Mr. Galloway) ceased to be employed by the County.

[20] The Ethics Complaints are protected reports pursuant to Florida's "Whistle-blower's Act", codified in Florida Statute § 112.3187 and pursuant to County Policy 2.17 – Whistleblower and Retaliation.

- Commissioner Curry has alleged Code Officers improperly identified him as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case, and that issue was reviewed by HR which determined such allegations had no basis for further action. Commissioner Curry was the complainant and did not request anonymity, and no new information has been provided that would justify reopening the matter.

- Throughout and after the Code enforcement and variance process, Commissioner Curry expressed frustration about being subject to Code enforcement and about the cost of obtaining a variance for the LDC violations.

- Following the partial resolution of the Curry Code Case, Commissioner Curry became involved in an "unrelated personnel issue" that had already been reviewed and closed by HR. The employee involved has not worked for Walton County for nearly a year. Re-engaging in a closed personnel matter outside the Commissioner's administrative role raises concerns about potential misuse of position and retaliation[21].

- Taken together, Commissioner Curry's actions raise concerns that, "Commissioner Curry may have used or attempted to use his position as a Commissioner to influence County operations, push for repeated review after lawful enforcement actions, or to engage in conduct that could reasonably be perceived as intimidating or retaliatory toward County employees."

See **Ex. 23**, pgs. 6-8.

Mr. Cornman's Ethics Complaint cites Florida Statute § 112.313(6)[22] and alleges violations of County policies related to ethical conduct and interference with employees performing their duties. The following is a summary of the assertions made by Mr. Cornman in the addendum to his Ethics Complaint dated February 9, 2026:

- On January 6, 2026, Mr. Cornman received a phone call from Mr. Kellenberger about a communication Mr. Kellenberger received from Commissioner Curry regarding a closed/locked exterior gate at the Santa Rosa Beach Code Office,

[21] The "unrelated personnel issue" was in reference to the investigation the County requested for HGRS to conduct regarding the dispute between former Code employee Buddy Burgess and Jim Holloway.

[22] *See* § 112.313(6), *Fla. Stat*. ("MISUSE OF PUBLIC POSITION.—*No public officer*, employee of an agency, or local government attorney *shall corruptly use or attempt to use his or her official position* or any property or resource which may be within his or her trust, or perform his or her official duties, *to secure a special privilege, benefit, or exemption* for himself, herself, or others. This section shall not be construed to conflict with s. 104.31")

inquiring specifically why the gate was closed/locked and requesting access for entry. This communication occurred prior to Code's operating hours of 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, and a photograph received from Commissioner Curry depicts posted signage identifying those operating hours and stating the gate remains closed outside of normal business hours. The gate is routinely opened during standard operating hours and secured outside of those hours in accordance with established County security practices.

- Numerous County Departments utilize similar fencing and secured access gates that remain locked outside of normal business hours. Commissioner Curry's inquiry into this routine security practice, as applied specifically to Code, occurred shortly after a lawful Code enforcement action involving Commissioner Curry personally.

- The timing, subject matter and context of Commissioner Curry's inquiry raises concerns that the authority of an elected office was used to initiate administrative scrutiny of routine departmental operations following a personal enforcement matter. Such actions risk interfering with departmental independence and "may reasonably be perceived as retaliatory in nature."

- Commissioner Curry's actions have had operational consequences, including increased staff concern, disruption to workplace morale, and uncertainty regarding continued employment within the department, all of which adversely affect the effective administration of Code.

- Commissioner Curry made multiple negative public statements on social media platforms, including Facebook, regarding Code following the resolution of the Curry Code Case including disparaging commentary directed towards Code. Commissioner Curry's public statements appear to intend to undermine Code's professional standing and administrative integrity.

- Commissioner Curry sent to Mr. Kellenberger and Legal on February 9, 2026 stating he had "ZERO faith" in Code.

See **Ex. 23**, pgs. 9-10.

In the addendum, Mr. Cornman stated he submitted additional information to document conduct occurring after, and in close temporal proximity to, the protected disclosures (in his Ethics Complaint). *See* **Ex. 23**, pg. 10. On March 7, 2026, Mr. Cornman emailed Administration to have his complaints, as detailed in the Ethics Complaint and addendum thereto, officially added to the scope of this Investigation. *See* **Ex. 23**, pg. 4. In this email, Mr. Cornman alleged Commissioner Curry was notified of the Ethics Complaint, but Commissioner Curry's retaliatory conduct directed towards Code had continued and escalated to include additional Facebook videos, photographs and repeated negative public commentary specifically targeting Code and its employees. Mr.

Cornman stated Commissioner Curry's conduct appears to be deliberate to attempt to intimidate, harass and undermine County employees for carrying out their job responsibilities. Mr. Cornman also raised concerns regarding abuse of position and retaliatory behavior. On March 10, 2026, HGRS was formally notified of Mr. Cornman's request for these issues to be included in this Investigation and agreed to do so.

On April 20, 2026, Mr. Cornman reported via email what he believed were "retaliatory false" allegations by Commissioner Curry regarding a check that had been delivered to the Code office, and on the same day sent an email to Melissa Thompson, Legal and Administration to, "correct some inaccurate information and false claims that were made about the Code Department and its staff concerning the recent payment…" *See* **Ex. 26**, pgs. 80-84. This was in response to an email Commissioner Curry sent on April 15, 2026 which stated, "[y]es especially when I was sent a photo of the check dated prior to the BCC meeting (yet it was stated they haven't paid yet and no one corrected that not even the **deputy code** admin that was n [sic] attendance) yet it was **laying on someone's desk in codes. How long was it sitting there? Why was it not in the bank? I have lots of questions**." *See* **Ex. 26**, pg. 83 (emphasis added).

On April 29, 2026, Mr. Cornman emailed HR with the subject line "Formal Concern: Continued Workplace Hostility and Retaliation - Commissioner Curry." In this email Mr. Cornman stated, in pertinent part:

> I am writing to formally document and report a continued pattern of retaliatory and harassing behavior by Commissioner Dan Curry. This most recent incident occurred during the April 28, 2026, Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting. During his presentation regarding a per-department budget request, Commissioner Curry specifically targeted the Code Department again, make comparisons of our budget and staffing levels to those of neighboring counties… It is our position that this request is not a routine exercise in fiscal oversight but another targeted act of retaliation fand intimidation following his personal code violation case. This behavior is consistent with his clear pattern of intimidation and hostility directed toward myself and my staff over the past several months. Furthermore, it is deeply concerning that county staff and public resources are being utilized to facilitate what appears to be a personal grievance…
>
> *See* **Ex. 60**.

2. Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint and Subsequent Complaints

Mr. Gainey filed his Ethics Complaint on February 19, 2026. The following is a summary of the assertions made by Mr. Gainey:

- In June 2025, Commissioner Curry submitted Code complaints against the Copelands via text message to Mr. Cornman, which were discussed on numerous

occasions in meetings with Mr. Gainey, Mr. Cornman, and Commissioner Curry in Commissioner Curry's office.

- Commissioner Curry said he was submitting these complaints on behalf of an elderly neighbor because she approached Commissioner Curry regarding a civil matter between her and the Copelands.

- Almost three (3) months later, the Copelands submitted Code complaints on the Currys' Property which resulted in violations of the LDC, and Commissioner Curry applied for and received a variance for the violations.

- After Commissioner Curry received the Granted Curry Variance, he started doing things that Mr. Gainey perceived as retaliation against Code for handling the Curry Code Case the same way Code would for any other person in the County.

See **Ex. 24**, pgs. 4-6.

Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint also lists the following actions Mr. Gainey alleged to be retaliation by Commissioner Curry:

- Commissioner Curry requested information on Code Officers who worked on the Copeland Code Case (noting that one Code Officer no longer works for the County and was disciplined according to County policy for body-worn camera policy violations).

- Commissioner Curry alleged Code Officers suggested to the Copelands that he was the complainant on the case (noting HR conducted an investigation on this issue and determined no further investigation was necessary).

- Commissioner Curry made statements during meetings about his frustrations about his Code case, including the processes he was having to go through and the money it was costing him.

- Commissioner Curry became involved in a Code case that was dealt with approximately a year earlier and was investigated by HR and County Administration but Commissioner Curry requested that it be reinvestigated by an outside agency.[23]

- Commissioner Curry went to the Code office and Beach Operations in South Walton before business hours, took pictures of the sheds and buildings and posted

[23] As stated above, this matter was related to former Code employee Buddy Burgess.

them on Facebook questioning whether Code's buildings were permitted.

- Commissioner Curry had to move his shed in his backyard to come into compliance, and he posted pictures of the "Hollands[24]" helping him move the shed. Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint states the Hollands have an open Code case, and after Code visited the Hollands' property, Commissioner Curry requested a meeting with Code, County officials and the Hollands, which Mr. Gainey believes to be an attempt to manipulate the Hollands' Code case. Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint further states he believed Commissioner Curry has attempted to, and may continue to, use his position to influence department operations, cause unjustified investigations and harassment of employees, and behave in a retaliatory and intimidating manner toward County employees.

See **Ex. 24**, pgs. 4-6.

On March 7, 2026, Mr. Gainey sent two (2) emails to HR, Administration and Legal regarding his Ethics Complaint. In the first email, Mr. Gainey stated Commissioner Curry posted Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint against him on Facebook and "invited anyone that has had issues with his agenda items [agenda items related to Code][25] to show up" to the upcoming BCC meeting. *See* **Ex. 23**, pg. 11. Mr. Gainey stated he felt this was an attempt to intimidate and discredit him and asked for Commissioner Curry's actions to be stopped. *See* **Ex. 23**, pg. 11. In his second email, Mr. Gainey stated that in his Ethics Complaint he asked for whistleblower protection, and that Commissioner Curry's recent actions were attempts to intimidate him and affect his duties as Deputy Director of Code. *See* **Ex. 23**, pg. 12. Mr. Gainey further noted the following actions by Commissioner Curry: (1) Commissioner Curry posting a copy of his Ethics Complaint online including Mr. Gainey's home address[26]; (2) inviting the public to show up to a BCC meeting if they have concerns about Code; and (3) Commissioner Curry posting a video addressing Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint. Mr. Gainey included the same allegations in an additional Ethics

[24] The Hollands own the Horse Power Pavillion, a multi-purpose venue space, coffee shop, bistro and brewery located in Freeport, Florida. https://www.horsepowerpavilion.com/. The Hollands and the County, and more specifically Code, have had a long-standing administrative and legal dispute regarding zoning and permitting at the Horse Power Pavillion. The legal dispute was settled outside of Court, however the Hollands have ongoing Code issues at their property.

[25] Commissioner Curry's Agenda Item for the BCC meeting held on March 10, 2026 (Report 26-0302) states, "Codes Discussion with possible motions. Selective Enforcement discussion, Body Cam policy, Code Enforcement Vehicles (count and policy), Fines past and present Update, FTE shift information as well as anything else the conversation may lead into." https://walton.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/519066/?preview=523231.

[26] Mr. Gainey was formerly a law enforcement officer with the WCSO and his personal information, including his home address, is subject to protection from public disclosure pursuant to Florida Statute § 119.071(4)(d)2.a. and other applicable Florida Statutes.

Complaint filed on March 19, 2026. The following is a summary of the assertions made by Mr. Gainey:

- On February 19, 2025, Mr. Gainey submitted an Ethics Complaint based on the actions of Commissioner Curry.

- On or about March 9, 2026, Commissioner Curry posted a copy of Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint on his "Friends of Dan Curry" Facebook page, as well as his personal Facebook page. Clearly posted on the complaint was Mr. Gainey's name, address and phone number. Mr. Gainey is a retired law enforcement officer and a current Code Office, and has his information protected at the county level through Walton County BCC and through the Property Appraiser's office. Mr. Gainey has his information protected for privacy and safety reasons.

- Mr. Gainey believes Commissioner Curry released his private information to the public maliciously, as retaliation for filing an Ethics Complaint. Mr. Gainey believes Commissioner Curry was attempting to intimidate him, harass him and get revenge on him for filing an Ethics Complaint, and believes Commissioner intentionally violated his privacy.

- Mr. Gainey believes Commissioner Curry has attempted to, and may continue to, use his position in attempt to intimidate him, harass him and get revenge on him for making an Ethics Complaint.

See **Ex. 24**, pgs. 8-10.

3. Mr. Baronti's Complaints Against Commissioner Curry and Allegations Regarding Deletion of Planning Public Record

In the course of this Investigation it was discovered that Mr. Baronti, the Senior Planner that, for a period of time, was responsible for assisting Commissioner Curry with the Curry Variance Application, made complaints about Commissioner Curry to HR. Specifically, Mr. Baronti complained to HR that Commissioner Curry was difficult to work with during the variance process, and after a miscommunication and/or disagreement between the two of them after a Planning meeting, Commissioner Curry made negative remarks about Mr. Baronti to Administration and on Facebook. *See* **Ex. 62**. On November 18, 2025, Commissioner Curry stated via email he intended to discuss Mr. Baronti at the November 24, 2025 BCC meeting stating, "[i]t deserves public discussion since Bob felt the need to get loud obnoxious and condescending in public with his "bring it. I only have a year left anyway. " [sic]" *See* **Ex. 26**, pg. 15. Additionally, Mr. Baronti alleged that Commissioner Curry told him, "heads would roll" if he did not get his variance, and that if he did not get his variance there would "be some changes." Mr. Baronti stated he felt threatened by Commissioner Curry and reported the incident to HR. Mr. Baronti eventually asked to be removed from the Curry Variance Application.

It has further been alleged by additional employees in Planning that on December 1, 2025, Commissioner Curry requested for one of the documents he submitted as part of the Curry Variance Application to be removed from the Curry Variance Application file and replaced with a different version of the document. According to statements, Commissioner Curry asked Planning employee Paula Mazan ("Ms. Mazan") to remove a document from his Variance Application file because the surveyor listed on the document did not want to be identified. Although Ms. Mazan informed Commissioner Curry that Planning does not delete or remove such documents, the document was indeed ultimately removed and deleted from the Curry Variance Application.

F. Scope of Investigation[27]

HGRS was engaged to investigate the complaints made by Commissioner Curry against Code, and to investigate the complaints made by County Employees against Commissioner Curry. More specifically, the scope of HGRS' Investigation is to gather facts and make findings regarding: (1) if Code selectively enforced LDC violations against Commissioner Curry; (2) due to comments made by Mr. Copeland under oath at the December 15, 2025 ZBA hearing, what involvement, if any, did Code have in the Copelands reporting LDC violations at the Currys' Property; (3) were County employees retaliated against and/or subjected to a hostile work environment by Commissioner Curry as a result of finding LDC violations at the Currys' Property; and (4) were County employees retaliated against and/or subjected to a hostile work environment by Commissioner Curry as a result of County employees filing Ethics Complaints against Commissioner Curry.

HGRS began its Investigation in early January 2026. On March 10, 2026, the scope of HGRS' Investigation was broadened to include complaints made by County employees against Commissioner Curry. HGRS actively received information from various witnesses and other sources beginning on January 6, 2026 through on or around May 4, 2026.

G. Timeline Summary

Before outlining HGRS' investigative process—including document review, witness interviews, and relevant policies—it is useful to provide a brief timeline of key events related to the Investigation.

DATE	EVENT
05/22/2022	Code received a complaint against the Currys' Property (related to a political sign and unrelated to the subject matter of this Investigation)
06/02/2025	Commissioner Curry first contacted Mr. Cornman about the Copelands' Property

[27] HGRS was not tasked with nor is it within its purview to make findings of violation(s) of Florida Statutes, or on matters currently under review or to be addressed by the Ethics Commission. Instead, HGRS was tasked with analyzing applicable Florida Statutes and Policies in conjunction with the facts and circumstances presented in witness statements, documents, etc. to make only determinations and findings specifically included in the Scope of Investigation, and to opine on recommended actions for the County to take as a result of such determinations.

06/05/2025	Code determined no LDC violation related to the wetland setback at the Copelands' Property
06/13/2025	Commissioner Curry reported the Copelands for portable toilet, trailer and other conditions at the Copelands' Property
06/15/2025	Commissioner Curry reported the Copelands for portable toilet, trailer and other conditions at the Copelands' Property
06/16/2025	Code found no LDC violation for portable toilet and dumpsters at the Copelands' Property after the Copelands moved these items
06/16/2025	Mr. Galloway visited the Copelands' Property and turned off his body camera during his interactions with the Copelands
06/30/2025	Copeland Code Case closed
08/27/2025	The Copelands filed a Code complaint against the Currys' Property for Rebar and Shed
08/28/2025	Code investigated the Currys' Property; Notice of Violation delivered to Commissioner Curry at his office
08/30/2025	WCSO called to the Curry and Copeland Properties regarding dispute between Commissioner Curry and Mr. Copeland
08/31/2025	The Currys and the Copelands issued Trespass Warnings against each other through the WCSO
09/01/2025	Commissioner Curry made a request for all body camera footage from the Copeland Code Case
09/03/2025	Commissioner Curry questioned Mr. Cornman about Mr. Galloway body camera footage via text message and email
09/04/2025	Mr. Cornman responded to Commissioner Curry via email and said Mr. Galloway did not follow established policy and directives and it was being addressed internally
09/04/2025	Mr. Galloway's Initial Written Reprimand for body camera Code Policy violation was issued
09/10/2025	The Copelands made additional complaint against the Currys' Property for the Driveways
09/16/2025	Code and HR met with Mr. Galloway in response to Mr. Galloway's Written Comment
09/19/2025	Commissioner Curry emailed Mr. Cornman to ask for policy and procedure on anonymous Code complaints
09/22/2025	Mr. Galloway was issued pre-discipline notice
09/23/2025	Commissioner Curry and Mr. Baronti held pre-application meeting for the Curry Variance Application
09/24/2025	Mr. Galloway resigned from employment with the County
10/17/2025	Curry Variance Application submitted to Planning
10/20/2025	Planning accepted Curry Variance Application as completed
11/24/2025	Commissioner Curry met with Planning to clarify whether Oakplace Road is County maintained for purposes of the Curry Variance Application
12/15/2025	ZBA hearing on Curry Variance Application – Granted Curry Variance
12/16/2025	Planning informed Code of the Granted Curry Variance and requirements for Curry Code Case

12/20/2025	Commissioner Curry made 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint to Legal and Admin
12/21/2025	Mr. Cornman responded to Commissioner Curry's 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint via email to Legal and Admin
12/22/2025	Mr. Copeland emailed various County employees regarding his Notice of Intent to Appeal the Granted Curry Variance and Demand to Stay Permits
01/06/2025	HGRS began its Investigation
01/08/2026	Mr. Cornman submitted complaint against Commissioner Curry to the County (eventually sent to the Ethics Commission)
01/13/2026	ZBA signed Granted Curry Variance
01/14/2026	Granted Curry Variance signed and filed with County Clerk of Court
01/29/2026	Planning said the Currys' BPR is approved but waiting on an As Built Survey
02/06/2026	Commissioner Curry visited various County facilities to assess accessory structures; sent photos to Mr. Kellenberger and inquired about the locked gate at the Code office before operating hours
02/09/2026	Commissioner Curry emailed Mr. Kellenberger and Legal regarding "County violations and selective enforcement"
02/09/2026	Mr. Cornman submitted additional complaint information to the County (eventually sent to the Ethics Commission)
02/19/2026	Mr. Gainey submitted Ethics Complaint to Ethics Commission
03/06/2026	Commissioner Curry posted BCC Meeting Agenda Item regarding Code on Facebook
03/07/2026	Commissioner Curry posted Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint and personal information (Mr. Gainey's address) on Facebook
03/07/2026	Mr. Cornman requested for the County to investigate his complaints against Commissioner Curry
03/18/2026	Mr. Kellenberger and/or Mr. Schoen determined Commissioner Curry did not need a BPR or As Built Survey; the Currys' BPR closed; Curry Code Case closed
03/19/2026	Mr. Gainey submitted an additional Ethics Complaint to the Ethics Commission
03/31/2026	Commissioner Curry sent an email with the subject line "Internal Audit / records request" requesting, "an audit type report" for Code and asked for the "number of employees in the codes dept? Staff, Officers and pay / salaries?"
04/02/2026	Commissioner Curry sent an email regarding Code vehicles
04/29/2026	Commissioner Curry posted a spreadsheet on Facebook titled, "Codes Comparisons"
04/29/2026	Mr. Cornman emailed HR with the subject line "Formal Concern: Continued Workplace Hostility and Retaliation - Commissioner Curry."
04/30/2026	Commissioner Curry made a public records request for, "all the salaries / hourly pay for the codes dept to continue with my budget comparison exercise."

III. INVESTIGATION DETERMINATIONS

A. Issues Presented/Brief Answers

1) Whether Commissioner Curry should have been listed as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case and whether Commissioner Curry made an "official" complaint to Code.

Brief Answer 1: Commissioner Curry should have been listed as the complainant regarding the Copeland Code Complaint because in texting and speaking with Mr. Cornman about the issues associated with the Copelands' Property, Commissioner Curry *did* report a potential violation (a complaint) that was not anonymous, there is no known law or procedure for retroactive anonymity associated with a non-anonymous complaint, and while the complaints were arguably generally related to public health, safety, and/or welfare issues, the complaints were arguably not sufficiently imminent in nature to justify anonymity.

2) Implications, if any, of Commissioner Curry's identity allegedly being disclosed as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case.

Brief Answer 2: Although Mr. Galloway may have referenced Commissioner Curry during his conversation with the Copelands on June 16, 2025, evidence suggests that due to the nature of the dispute between the Currys and the Copelands, the Copelands had independent reasons to believe the Currys were making the complaints. Additionally, there is no evidence or legal authority to suggest Commissioner Curry was improperly identified by any Code Officer as the complainant in the Copeland Code Case. Moreover, whether Commissioner Curry was identified as the complainant is immaterial because Commissioner Curry's communications to Code regarding the Copelands are public records pursuant to Florida Statute § 119. Thus, Commissioner Curry was not adversely impacted by any Code Officers' actions.

3) Whether Commissioner Curry's continued complaints regarding Mr. Galloway's body camera footage were justified; and the propriety of Code and HR's handling of Commissioner Curry's complaints regarding Mr. Galloway's body camera footage.

Brief Answer 3: Commissioner Curry was justified in bringing Mr. Galloway's body camera footage to Code's attention. In response, Code and HR sufficiently and appropriately addressed Commissioner Curry's concerns and issued the appropriate level of discipline to Mr. Galloway in accordance with Policies. At all times thereafter, it was unreasonable for Commissioner Curry to continue to raise the issue after the matter was appropriately handled by Code and HR, and especially after Mr. Galloway ceased to be employed by the County.

4) Whether Commissioner Curry's concerns regarding Ms. Hicks' and/or Mr. Bennett's body camera footage are justified.

Brief Answer 4: Commissioner Curry's allegations that Ms. Hicks and/or Mr. Bennett improperly disclosed him as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case are unfounded, and it was not reasonable for Commissioner Curry to continue raising the issue after the matter was appropriately investigated by Code and HR and because Ms. Hicks' body camera footage does not indicate Ms. Hicks ever identified Commissioner Curry.

5) The propriety of Code's handling of the Copeland Code Case, generally.

Brief Answer 5: With the exception of Mr. Galloway's Code Policy violation regarding his body camera, and the improper characterization of Commissioner Curry's complaints against the Copelands as anonymous, Code otherwise appropriately handled the Copeland Code Case and there is no evidence to suggest Code violated any other Policy, Code Policy or Florida Statute in handling the Copeland Code Case.

6) The facts and circumstances regarding Commissioner Curry's alleged improper use of his position as a Commissioner during the Copeland Code Case.

Brief Answer 6: Although not tasked to determine whether Commissioner Curry violated applicable laws or misused his official position, the facts regarding this allegation by County employees suggest, at a minimum, Commissioner Curry engaged with and had access to County Departments in a capacity that ordinary citizens do not, and Commissioner Curry utilized this unique access to matters of likely a personal nature rather than to address broader County business.

7) Whether Code was involved in or otherwise encouraged the Copelands to make a complaint against the Currys' Property and the veracity and interpretation of Mr. Copeland's December 15, 2025 testimony at ZBA hearing.

Brief Answer 7: Evidence suggests that Code merely informed the Copelands of the proper protocol for filing a complaint in direct response to the Copelands' informal complaints regarding the Currys' Property.

8) The propriety of Code's handling of the Curry Code Case, generally, and whether Code selectively enforced LDC violations at the Currys' Property.

Brief Answer 8: Code appropriately handled the Curry Code Case and there is no evidence to suggest Code violated any Policy, Code Policy or Florida Statute. Significantly, Code did not selectively enforce LDC violations at the Currys' Property as alleged by Commissioner Curry, primarily because: (1) the Currys' Property did have three (3) LDC violations; and, (2) the other properties identified by Commissioner Curry (other than one) do not have any reported LDC violations or resulting Code cases.

9) Whether Code is a reactive or proactive County Department.

Brief Answer 9: Code is both proactive and reactive dependent upon the particular and specific circumstances of each case. Such determination hinges on a fact-specific analysis, therefore Code cannot be summarily categorized as either proactive or reactive. Accordingly, Commissioner Curry's contention that Code is proactive on some cases and reactive on others is actually correct, but insignificant considering Code sufficiently and appropriately handled the Copeland and Curry Code Cases.

10) Whether Code should have issued LDC violations to neighboring properties later identified to HGRS by Commissioner Curry.

Brief Answer 10: It was appropriate for Code to not issue LDC violations to neighboring properties identified by Commissioner Curry during the Curry Code Case because other than the Sabella's Code Case which was appropriately handled by Code, there are no official Code complaints against any of the identified properties.

11) Whether Planning selectively required Commissioner Curry to participate in the BPR.

Brief Answer 11: The BPR was not selectively enforced against Commissioner Curry, and Commissioner Curry was ultimately relieved of any BPR requirements and received a $100.00 refund for his application fee.

12) Whether Commissioner Curry's concerns regarding LDC violations on County-owned properties are justified.

Brief Answer 12: While it is not inherently improper for Commissioner Curry to question whether County-owned properties have LDC violations, evidence suggests Commissioner Curry only raised these concerns in response to Code finding LDC violations at the Currys' Property. Thus, Commissioner Curry's ongoing and continued public criticism of Code regarding alleged LDC violations on County-owned property is likely unjustified and retaliatory in nature.

13) Commissioner Curry's public criticism of Code, generally; Whether Commissioner Curry retaliated against Code and/or subjected Code employees to a hostile work environment for finding LDC violations at his property; Whether Commissioner Curry retaliated against Code employees and/or subjected Code employees to a hostile working environment for filing Ethics Complaints; and the Veracity of factual allegations made in Ethics Complaints.[28]

Brief Answer 13: The factual allegations made against Commissioner Curry in the Ethics Complaints can be substantiated and evidence suggests Commissioner Curry engaged in retaliatory behavior against Code employees after Code found LDC violations at the Currys' Property, and after Code employees filed Ethics Complaints against him. Additionally, evidence suggests Commissioner Curry created a hostile work environment for Code employees due, in part, to his continued undue public criticism of Code and social media activity.

14) Whether Commissioner Curry retaliated against Planning employees and/or subjected Planning employees to a hostile work environment for having to submit the Curry Variance Application and go through the variance process with Planning.

Brief Answer 14: Evidence suggests Commissioner Curry likely subjected Mr. Baronti to a hostile work environment while working on the Curry Variance Application, which was somewhat resolved when Mr. Baronti requested to be removed from the Curry Variance Application. Notwithstanding, evidence also suggests that while Commissioner Curry had negative attitude regarding the variance process, generally, his conduct did not rise to the level of retaliation and/or a hostile work environment towards other Planning employees.

15) Whether Commissioner Curry has engaged in the day-to-day activities of the County and thus overstepped in his role as Commissioner by engaging in various Code Cases.

Brief Answer 15: Commissioner Curry has likely not overstepped in his role by engaging in the Hollands'/the Horse Power Pavillion's Code case because evidence suggests Commissioner Curry was specifically appointed by the BCC to serve as a liaison between the County and the Hollands. However, because of Commissioner Curry's self-proclaimed close personal relationship with the Hollands, it would appear problematic for Commissioner Curry to vote on or otherwise have influence on any decisions the County or BCC may make regarding the Hollands. Conversely, it is likely that Commissioner Curry has overstepped in his role by actively involving himself in other ongoing Code cases rather than merely reporting information to Administration.

[28] As stated herein above, HGRS has not been tasked with making determinations regarding violation(s) of Florida Statutes or regarding matters that have been or will be addressed by the Ethics Commission.

16) Whether Commissioner Curry impermissibly asked Planning to remove/delete a public record from the Curry Variance Application file.

Brief Answer 16: Evidence suggests Commissioner Curry improperly instructed Planning employees to remove a document and public record from the Curry Variance Application, and that Planning employees only acquiesced to this request because of Commissioner Curry's status as a Commissioner.

B. HGRS' Investigation Procedure

1) Documents Reviewed[29]

a) Initial documents received which were submitted to the County by Commissioner Curry including but not limited to:
   (1) Commissioner Curry's 12/20/2025 email complaint and corresponding documents;
   (2) Photographs of Commissioner Curry's personal residence including driveway and shed;
   (3) Photographs of neighboring homeowner's properties;
   (4) Emails between Commissioner Curry and various County employees dates December 23, 2025 - January 5, 2026
   (5) Emails from Commissioner Curry from February 2026 (collectively, **Composite Exhibit 1**)

b) Zone Board of Adjustments Meeting video footage[30]

c) Zoning Board of Adjustments Agenda Item Report 25-1638, the Curry Variance Application and associated documents (December 15, 2025) (**Exhibit 2**)

d) Code Case Detailed Activity Report CE-22-00795 June 2022 regarding Commissioner Curry's personal residence (**Exhibit 3**)

e) Code Case Detailed Activity Report CE-25-01709 August 2025 regarding Commissioner Curry's personal residence (**Exhibit 4**)

f) Code Case Detailed Activity Report CE-25-01499 regarding the Copelands' property (**Exhibit 5**)

g) Applicable Walton County Board of County Commissioners Human Resources Policies (the "Policies" or a "Policy") (relevant Policies attached hereto as **Composite Exhibit 6**)

h) Applicable Florida Statutes (relevant Florida Statutes attached hereto as **Composite Exhibit 7**)

[29] The documents reviewed are not listed in any particular order.

[30] https://www.youtube.com/live/9zyCqrZgCQE?si=NdtSsVyBh0tPgpmU

i) Applicable Walton County Code Compliance Policy & Procedures ("Code Policies") (relevant Code Policies attached hereto as **Composite Exhibit 8**)

j) Draft Code Policies in progress (draft Word Documents) ("Draft Policies") (relevant draft documents attached hereto as **Composite Exhibit 9**)[31]

k) Drew Galloway Walton County BCC Disciplinary Action Form (**Exhibit 10**)

l) Reveal Media MAV Report on Drew Galloway Body camera and corresponding email (**Exhibit 11**)

m) Drew Galloway Personnel File (**Exhibit 12**)

n) October 6, 2025 Email from Ms. Adkinson re: G. Hicks (**Exhibit 13**)

o) Text message correspondence between the following individuals regarding the Copeland Code Case:
   (1) Tony Cornman and Commissioner Curry (**Exhibit 14**)
   (2) Tony Cornman and Georgina Hicks (**Exhibit 15**)
   (3) Tony Cornman and group of Code employees (**Exhibit 16**)
   (4) Various County employees group messages (**Compose Exhibit 17**)

p) Body camera video footage from:
   (1) Drew Galloway dated June 16, 2025 (**Video Exhibit A**)
   (2) Georgina Hicks dated June 26, 2025 (**Video Exhibit B**)
   (3) Darnell Bennett dated June 14, 2025 (**Video Exhibit C**)
   (4) Darnell Bennett dated June 15, 2025 (**Video Exhibit D**)

q) Emails regarding the Copeland Code Case (**Composite Exhibit 18**)

r) County facility photos and information received from Commissioner Curry February 2026 (**Composite Exhibit 19**)

s) Emails and information received from or regarding Commissioner Curry from March 2026 – April 2026 (**Composite Exhibit 20**)

t) Commissioner Curry Facebook posts and information regarding yard sale signs and Code (**Composite Exhibit 21)**

u) Emails and information regarding the Curry Variance Application and Granted Curry Variance (**Composite Exhibit 22**)

v) Tony Cornman Ethics Complaint and supplemented information (**Composite Exhibit 23**)[32]

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[31] The Draft Policies are in draft form and are not currently adopted as Code Policies but were reviewed in the context of this Investigation.

[32] Some of the information contained in Composite Exhibit 23 has been redacted pursuant to Florida Statute § 119.071(4)(d)2.a. The redactions seen in Composite Exhibit 23 were done by HGRS and were not redacted when received.

w) Michael Gainey Ethics Complaint and supplemented information (**Composite Exhibit 24**)[33]

x) Emails and information related to County employee Ethics Complaints (**Composite Exhibit 25**)

y) Emails received from Tony Cornman (**Composite Exhibit 26**)

z) Photos received from Tony Cornman (**Composite Exhibit 27**)[34]

aa) Videos received from Tony Cornman
   (1) Video dated March 5, 2026 (**Video Exhibit E**)
   (2) Video dated March 11, 2026 (**Video Exhibit F**)
   (3) Video dated March 15, 2026 (**Video Exhibit G**)
   (4) Video dated March 22, 2026 (**Video Exhibit H**)

bb) Documents received from Planning regarding permits, development orders and surveys related to all County properties[35]

cc) Emails and documents received from Lisa Jefferies ("Ms. Jefferies") (**Composite Exhibit 28**)

dd) Correspondence related to Commissioner Curry's involvement in the Hacker Code Case (**Composite Exhibit 29**)

ee) Text messages between Brian Kellenberger and Commissioner Curry January 2026 – February 2026 (**Exhibit 30**)

ff) Code Case Detailed Activity Report CE-25-01406 regarding 625 Waterview Cove (**Exhibit 31**)

gg) Applicable sections of the Walton County Land Development Code ("LDC") (relevant sections attached hereto as **Composite Exhibit 32**)

hh) Stamped and filed Granted Curry Variance dated January 14, 2026 (**Exhibit 33**)

ii) March 10, 2026 BCC Meeting Agenda and Agenda Item Report 26-0301 (**Composite Exhibit 34**)

jj) November 24, 2025 BCC Meeting Minutes – Item 49 (**Exhibit 35**)

kk) September 4, 2015 Grand Jury Report (**Exhibit 36**)

ll) Mr. Copeland's Petition for Writ of Certiorari regarding the Granted Curry Variance (**Exhibit 37)**

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[33] Some of the information contained in Composite Exhibit 24 has been redacted pursuant to Florida Statute § 119.071(4)(d)2.a. The redactions seen in Composite Exhibit 24 were done by HGRS and were not redacted when received.

[34] Some of the information contained in Composite Exhibit 27 has been redacted pursuant to Florida Statute § 119.071(4)(d)2.a. The redactions seen in Composite Exhibit 27 were done by HGRS and were not redacted when received.

[35] Due to the volume of the documents received and because they are not necessary to directly reference for purposes of this Investigation, these documents are not attached as an exhibit.

mm) Correspondence from the Florida Commission on Ethics (marked as Exhibit 38)[36]

nn) Applicable sections of the Florida Constitution (**Composite Exhibit 39**)

oo) Videos on Commissioner Curry's Facebook Pages:
- (1) Video dated February 6, 2026 (**Video Exhibit I**)
- (2) Video dated February 7, 2026 (**Video Exhibit J**)
- (3) Video dated February 8, 2026 (**Video Exhibit K**)
- (4) Video dated February 8, 2026 (2) (**Video Exhibit L**
- (5) Video dated February 9, 2026 (**Video Exhibit M**)
- (6) Video dated March 5, 2026 (**Video Exhibit N**)[37]
- (7) Video dated March 10, 2026 (**Video Exhibit O**)
- (8) Video dated March 22, 2026 (**Video Exhibit P**)
- (9) Video dated April 20, 2026 (**Video Exhibit Q**)
- (10) Video dated April 21, 2026 (**Video Exhibit R**)

pp) Posts and photos on Commissioner Curry's Facebook Pages:
- (1) Post dated February 6, 2026 (1) (**Exhibit 40**)
- (2) Post dated February 6, 2026 (2) (**Exhibit 41**)
- (3) Post dated February 6, 2026 (3) (**Exhibit 42**)
- (4) Post dated February 6, 2026 (4) (**Exhibit 43**)
- (5) Post dated February 7, 2026 (1) (**Exhibit 44**)
- (6) Post dated February 7, 2026 (2) (**Exhibit 45**)
- (7) Post dated February 8, 2026 (**Exhibit 46**)
- (8) Post dated February 12, 2026 (**Exhibit 47**)
- (9) Post dated February 13, 2026 (1) (**Exhibit 48**)
- (10) Post dated February 13, 2026 (2) (**Exhibit 49**)
- (11) Post dated February 13, 2026 (3) (**Exhibit 50**)
- (12) Post dated February 13, 2026 (4) (**Exhibit 51**)
- (13) Post dated February 28, 2026 (**Exhibit 52**)
- (14) Post dated March 6, 2026 (**Exhibit 53**)
- (15) Post dated March 7, 2026 (**Exhibit 54**)
- (16) Post dated March 9, 2026 (**Exhibit 55**)
- (17) Post dated March 15, 2026 (**Exhibit 56**)
- (18) Post dated April 19, 2026 (**Exhibit 57**)
- (19) Post dated April 21, 2026 (1) (**Exhibit 58**)
- (20) Post dated April 21, 2026 (2) (**Exhibit 59**)

[36] Exhibit 38 is confidential pursuant to Fla. Stat. § 112.324 and is not attached as an exhibit to this Report.

[37] Out of an abundance of caution, certain exhibits are attached in duplicate to ensure the full extent of the information contained therein is captured. For example, Commissioner Curry's social media post from March 5, 2025 is attached as both Video Exhibits E and N to capture relevant dates for completeness of record.

qq) Mr. Cornman's April 29, 2026 email complaint regarding Commissioner Curry (**Exhibit 60**)
rr) Emails and information received in May 2026 (**Exhibit 61**)
ss) Documents received from HR regarding Mr. Baronti's complaint against Commissioner Curry (**Exhibit 62**)
tt) Commissioner Curry's Facebook post dated April 29, 2026 (**Exhibit 63**)
uu) Hillsborough County, Florida Workplace Harassment Policy (**Exhibit 64)**
vv) Defuniak Springs, Florida City Charter (**Exhibit 65**)
ww) Public records received from WCSO:
    (1) Documents (**Composite Exhibit 66**)
    (2) Audio file 2025-113484 S22V Curry1.wav RD (**Audio Exhibit A**)
    (3) Audio file 2025-113484 S22V Curry2.wav RD (**Audio Exhibit B**)
    (4) Video file dated August 30, 2025 (1) (**Video Exhibit S**)
    (5) Video file dated August 30, 2025 (2) (**Video Exhibit T**)
    (6) Video file 3 dated August 31, 2025 (**Video Exhibit U**)
xx) Florida Commission on Ethics Public Records Exemption Request (**Exhibit 67**)

2) Interview Summaries

a) Commissioner Dan Curry – January 8, 2026

HGRS spoke briefly via phone call with Commissioner Curry on January 8, 2026 to schedule an interview. During this call, Commissioner Curry stated one of his issues was that Code selectively enforced LDC violations against him. Commissioner Curry stated his second issue concerned comments made by Mr. Copeland at the ZBA hearing, which he believed was evidence of Code and Mr. Copeland colluding against him. Commissioner Curry stated that in a prior BCC meeting he brought up the issue of Code's uncollected fines, which he believes sparked animosity between himself and Code. Commissioner Curry also stated he was concerned that Code improperly disclosed him as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case related to a Code Officer turning his body camera off at the Copelands' Property.

b) Commissioner Dan Curry – January 15, 2025

HGRS interviewed Commissioner Curry in person on January 15, 2026. The primary purpose of this interview was to get additional information from Commissioner Curry regarding his complaint in order to confirm the scope of the Investigation.

Commissioner Curry began by recounting his original conversation with Mr. Cornman regarding concerns he contended he received from neighbors regarding the Copelands' Property. Commissioner Curry stated he asked Mr. Cornman to look into issues reported at the Copelands' Property including potential drilling in a preservation zone, a portable toilet placed in the road, an unattached trailer located in the right of way, a large pile of dirt in the roadway, and cars and/or a trailer parked in front of a fire hydrant. Commissioner Curry stated at the time he made this report to Mr. Cornman, he did not know reports could be anonymous, but Mr. Cornman informed him that it would be anonymous because it was a complaint regarding a public safety issue. Commissioner Curry stated he was trying to be "unofficial" when he contacted Mr. Cornman, but Mr. Cornman later informed Commissioner Curry that any text or phone call is considered a formal complaint.

Commissioner Curry stated that through public records requests he became aware that a Code Officer, Mr. Galloway, turned off his body camera during a visit to the Copelands' Property. Commissioner Curry stated that in the body camera footage Mr. Galloway identified Commissioner Curry as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case and eventually turned his body camera off, and he could only assume they were talking about Commissioner Curry after the body camera was turned off. Commissioner Curry stated he believed being identified as the complainant was a violation of policy because reports regarding environmental concerns are supposed to remain anonymous. Commissioner Curry stated that because of the lack of anonymity, he was "attacked" by the Copelands.

As it relates to the LDC violations reported on his property, Commissioner Curry stated that the issues related to his shed and driveways. Commissioner Curry stated that after he purchased the shed, he learned that corner lots are subject to a twenty (20) foot front and side set back, and his shed was located within that setback. Commissioner Curry stated he had already relocated his shed. As to the driveways, Commissioner Curry stated he installed a half circle driveway in the front of his house, in addition to a separate original driveway on the side of his house. Commissioner Curry further stated that one of his driveways does not connect to a County-maintained road and, therefore in his view, the LDC requirement limiting total driveway connections to County-maintained roads to twenty (20) feet does not apply to all of his driveways. Commissioner Curry also stated that numerous properties in his neighborhood have driveway connections exceeding twenty (20) feet and that, during the variance process, he submitted photographs of neighboring sheds and driveways to the ZBA for comparison. As a result of the LDC violations at his property, Commissioner Curry applied for a variance through Planning and received a variance for both the shed and the driveway. Commissioner Curry stated the variance process required him to obtain a survey and cost approximately $2,000. According to Commissioner Curry, the Copelands were not required to incur similar expenses in connection with the LDC violations identified at their property and were instead only required to remove items from the roadway.

Commissioner Curry stated he felt Code was being selective against him because, according to him, many properties in his neighborhood have the same conditions that would

otherwise be in violation of the LDC, such as driveways that exceed the permitted footage for connections to roads, and violations related to sheds. Commissioner Curry further stated Code Officers were being selective towards him because the Copelands have what he considers a non-compliant driveway, which Code did not address during the Copeland Code Case. Commissioner Curry stated that he believed the Code Department was a proactive agency yet failed to address any of these similar conditions in his neighborhood. Commissioner Curry also stated there was an elderly lady in his neighborhood that had a non-compliant shed which the Copelands reported, and that Code had to walk across a non-compliant driveway to "slap a sticker" on her non-compliant shed. Commissioner Curry speculated that he may have been targeted by Code due to his public criticism of Code in a BCC meeting that took place in or around August 2025 in which he mentioned that Code had millions of dollars in uncollected Code fines.

Commissioner Curry stated there has only been one other Code complaint related to his property, which was in 2022 concerning a political campaign sign which was ultimately resolved.

c) Joseph Copeland – February 12, 2026

HGRS interviewed Mr. Copeland on February 12, 2026. Mr. Copeland and his wife own a construction business and have been building a home on their property which is located across the street from the Currys' Property in Freeport. Mr. Copeland stated he became involved in this matter when Commissioner Curry reported LDC violations at his property to Mr. Cornman. Mr. Copeland further stated that, before the dispute with the Currys arose, the parties maintained a cordial relationship consistent with that of neighboring homeowners.

Mr. Copeland stated the first violation noted at his property was in relation to a well that someone claimed was placed in a wetland setback zone. Mr. Copeland stated Mr. Galloway was assigned to his case, and Mr. Galloway told him there was also a loud noise complaint related to the well. Mr. Copeland stated during this particular visit, Mr. Galloway determined the well was in compliance with the LDC. Mr. Copeland stated he did not know and had never interacted with Mr. Galloway prior to Mr. Galloway's first visit to his property in June 2025.

Mr. Copeland said a few days later, three (3) or four (4) people from the County came to his property to look again at the wetland setback zone and well issue, including Director of Planning Mr. Schoen, Mr. Galloway, Gina Waddell ("Ms. Waddell"), and one other gentleman whose name he could not recall. Mr. Copeland stated the group remained at his property for roughly forty-five (45) minutes and advised him that they did not observe any conditions out of compliance. Mr. Copeland stated Mr. Cornman thereafter submitted an email request for an environmental review of the Copelands' Property to confirm that no improvements were located within the fifty-foot (50) setback zone. According to Mr. Copeland, an additional survey[38] was

[38] Mr. Copeland also stated that before the Code complaint and during the BPR process they had to submit an As Built Survey to prove where structures were located on the property, and that the As Built Survey for his property was accepted by the Building Department.

then required to confirm compliance, which resulted in a $500 expense. Mr. Copeland further stated that Mr. Galloway later returned to the property and advised him that a permit for the well was needed to close the case, which the Copelands subsequently submitted to the County.

Mr. Copeland stated another Code Officer, Ms. Hicks, came to his property regarding his trailer, in addition to another issue with his trailer being parked in front of a fire hydrant. Mr. Copeland stated Code came to his property and made him aware he could not be within fifteen (15) feet of the fire hydrant, so he moved the trailer right away. Mr. Copeland stated for every LDC violation raised concerning his property he remedied the violation immediately.

Mr. Copeland stated that after repeated visits by Code to his property, he contacted Code to determine the basis for the visits and learned that an anonymous complaint had been submitted. Mr. Copeland stated at this point he began to think the Currys made the complaints because Ms. Curry had previously sent the Copelands a text message claiming the Copelands "had not been neighborly" and that dust from the Copelands' construction was drifting onto the Currys' vehicles, also that the Currys had made comments about his trailer and portable toilet. Mr. Copeland stated there are many vehicles that go to and from the Currys' Property because Ms. Curry runs a daycare business at the Currys' home, and people often park in the road for fifteen (15) minutes at a time. Mr. Copeland stated he placed his trailer in a specific spot to try and clear space for the daycare traffic, but that eventually issues with daycare drop off began when people would park beside the trailer and block the road. Mr. Copeland stated he responded to Ms. Curry's text and told her they were trying to finish the construction and coordinate around Ms. Curry's daycare.

Mr. Copeland stated that, based on his interactions with Ms. Curry, he assumed the Currys were responsible for the Code complaints and therefore submitted a public records request. Mr. Copeland stated he reviewed pages of Mr. Cornman and Commissioner Curry texting and emailing back and forth with Commissioner Curry asking Mr. Cornman to go to the Copelands' Property. Mr. Copeland stated none of the Code Officers or employees ever articulated who the complainant was, but that Mr. Copeland himself would refer to Commissioner Curry by name when discussing his property with Code Officers because he assumed Commissioner Curry was the person who complained.

Mr. Copeland stated he documented seven (7) different times that Code visited his property, but believed Code actually visited his home ten (10) to twelve (12) times in total. Mr. Copeland stated Code eventually stopped visiting his property after WCSO was called during a verbal altercation between himself and Commissioner Curry at their properties in August 2025. Mr. Copeland noted that during the August 30, 2025 verbal dispute with Commissioner Curry, Commissioner Curry admitted that he told Code to investigate potential Code violations at the Copelands' Property.

Mr. Copeland stated after Code stopped coming to his house he was still harassed by the Currys and detailed different arguments between them concerning blowing leaves and/or grass back and forth between the properties, a dispute regarding Mr. Copeland placing his trailer in a

vacant lot, and Commissioner Curry placing a sign[39] in his yard that, in Mr. Copeland's opinion, referenced the Copelands. Mr. Copeland stated Commissioner Curry also put negative information on his personal and official Commissioner Facebook pages about the Copelands' business and properties. Mr. Copeland stated Commissioner Curry posted malicious videos on Facebook calling the Copelands' house a "monster house" and posted the video of the August 30, 2025 verbal altercation between the two. Mr. Copeland also stated he learned through WCSO that the Currys obtained a no-trespass[40] against him, his wife and his kids, so in response he obtained a no-trespass against Commissioner and Ms. Curry, but not their children.

Mr. Copeland stated before he filed a formal Code complaint against the Currys' Property he already he knew the Currys' Property had conditions that were not in compliance with the LDC. Mr. Copeland stated he pointed these things out to Code Officers when they were at his property during the Copeland Code Case, but that Code told him they could not do anything unless an official complaint was filed. Mr. Copeland stated one day he was driving down the street with his trailer, hit the rebar located in Commissioner Curry's yard, and then decided to make a formal Code complaint against the Currys' Property. Mr. Copeland stated he called the Code office to make his complaint and that it was possible he spoke to Ms. Waddell, although he could not specifically recall.

Mr. Copeland stated that Code did not direct or encourage him to file a complaint against the Currys' Property and that he ultimately did so on his own initiative. He stated that, in response to his informal reports concerning the Currys' Property, Code personnel advised only that if Mr. Copeland wanted Code to investigate the Currys' Property, Mr. Copeland would have to go through the formal process and file an official Code complaint. Mr. Copeland clarified that Code employees merely explained the complaint process and did not instruct or encourage him to file a complaint.

Mr. Copeland stated he believed Commissioner Curry improperly used his position as Commissioner to harass him and his family over a private dispute, including numerous direct communications by Commissioner Curry with the Director of Code, Mr. Cornman. Mr. Copeland further stated that, unlike Commissioner Curry, he as a private citizen did not have direct access to call or text the Director of Code, including on weekends, to request an investigation or other action by Code.

When asked about Mr. Galloway turning off his body camera, Mr. Copeland stated he understood that Mr. Galloway's body camera battery died. Mr. Copeland stated that at the time Mr. Galloway was at his property, he already assumed the Currys were the source of the complaint to

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[39] Mr. Copeland stated the sign said something similar to, "God Bless Ken," which according to Mr. Copeland is the male equivalent of calling someone a "Karen." In relevant culture, "Karen" is sometimes used colloquially to describe someone perceived as entitled, demanding, or prone to causing issues over minor inconveniences.

[40] A no-trespass order is a directive—often initiated by a property owner or law enforcement—that bans a person from private property, making subsequent entry a criminal act.

Code. Mr. Copeland said he made a comment to Mr. Galloway asking why the Currys would not leave him alone and that Mr. Galloway may have made a comment about the Currys in response, but that Mr. Galloway never actually initiated or articulated who the complainant was. Mr. Copeland stated he believed Mr. Galloway was instructed to make edits to his report at the Copelands' Property but refused to, which is why he was fired.

When asked about the statements he made at the ZBA hearing, Mr. Copeland stated he understood how his comments could be misconstrued to suggest Code instructed him to file the complaint against the Currys, but that such interpretation is incorrect. Mr. Copeland reiterated that Code only ever informed him of the formal complaint process, and that they did not encourage him or otherwise tell him to file a complaint against the Currys' Property. Mr. Copeland also acknowledged that his statements about a complaint against Commissioner Curry in 2022 were a result of a misunderstanding and not related to the present dispute. Mr. Copeland clarified when he said that he made his complaint against the Currys because of "other things happening," he was referring the harassment he was experiencing from the Currys. Mr. Copeland stated he appealed the ZBA's decision to grant the Currys' variance. Mr. Copeland stated he believed Commissioner Curry had ex pare communications with the ZBA Chairman related to Commissioner Curry's requested variance. Mr. Copeland also stated he believed Commissioner Curry was holding meetings with the ZBA and County staff at his office related to his variance and that it was improper to do so.

Mr. Copeland was adamant in stating that he did not believe Code or any Code employees did anything wrong as it relates to the violations reported at this property, only that he was frustrated that he was being reported for Code violations by Commissioner Curry utilizing his position as a Commissioner to do so in a manner an ordinary citizen could not.

d) Tony Cornman – February 12, 2026

HGRS interviewed Director of Code, Mr. Cornman, on February 12, 2026. At the outset of the interview, Mr. Cornman stated he believed Code was being retaliated against by Commissioner Curry. Mr. Cornman stated as Director of Code, he typically meets with all Commissioners before BCC meetings and that he has attempted to maintain a cooperative working relationship with Commissioner Curry.

Mr. Cornman stated when Commissioner Curry originally contacted him regarding complaints concerning the Copelands' Property, Commissioner Curry represented that his neighbors brought these concerns to Commissioner Curry. Mr. Cornman stated he told Commissioner Curry he would not list Commissioner Curry as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case because of the report of a well in a preservation area, which was an environmental concern. Mr. Cornman stated he understood Florida Statutes allow for a complaint to be anonymous in certain circumstances involving environmental or safety issues, and he determined that the reported conditions—including the alleged well in a protected area, as well as dirt, a portable toilet, and a trailer in the roadway—could implicate environmental or safety concerns.

Mr. Cornman stated that he treated the complaint as anonymous on that basis and "to protect" and "out of respect for" Commissioner Curry. Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry did not request to be anonymous and did not raise his anonymity as an issue until the Copelands filed a complaint against the Currys' Property. Mr. Cornman stated that Code complaints may be initiated by telephone call or email, and that Commissioner Curry communicated his complaints through calls, text messages, and photographs of the Copelands' Property. Mr. Cornman further stated that Commissioner Curry did not request any particular enforcement action, but was persistent in reporting conditions at the property. According to Mr. Cornman, after the complaint was initiated, Commissioner Curry continued to send photographs, which Mr. Cornman forwarded to Code Officers. Mr. Cornman stated that Code did not proactively dispatch officers to the Copelands' Property but instead responded only to the complaints being reported.

Mr. Cornman stated Mr. Galloway was the Code Officer assigned to the Copelands' Property and after a few visits to the property did not find a well in the preservation area. Mr. Cornman stated Brad Bohn ("Mr. Bohn") in Planning also got involved and made a determination that the well was not in the preservation area. Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry then added to the complaint, reporting dirt, a portable toilet, and trailer in the road. Mr. Cornman stated he sent Mr. Bennett (another Code Officer) to the Copelands' Property and he placed a notice to remove the portable toilet. Mr. Cornman stated he believed the portable toilet was a safety issue and therefore justified an anonymous complaint.

Mr. Cornman stated that Commissioner Curry later made an additional complaint concerning the well. Mr. Cornman stated at this point, the Copelands had already determined on their own that Commissioner Curry was the complainant. Mr. Cornman stated Mr. Galloway had to go back to the Copelands' Property three (3) to four (4) times about the well, and during one visit Mr. Galloway referenced the Copelands' neighbor (presumedly Commissioner Curry) and turned his body camera off, which was a violation of Code Policy. In response, Mr. Galloway was reprimanded but in a written response to the discipline maintained his position that the body camera battery died. Mr. Cornman investigated further and through a report generated by a Code Operation Support Specialist was able to determine that Mr. Galloway's body camera was in fact turned off. Mr. Cornman stated this report showed where the body camera on/off button had been pushed down manually. Mr. Cornman stated that he thereafter met with Mr. Galloway, Ms. Adkinson, and Mr. Gainey regarding the report, during which Mr. Galloway asked whether Mr. Cornman wanted him to resign. Mr. Cornman stated that he responded that Mr. Galloway could make that decision for himself, and that Mr. Galloway subsequently resigned from County employment.

Mr. Cornman speculated that when Mr. Galloway turned his body camera off, Mr. Galloway may have expressed frustration and apologized for having to go to the Copelands' Property multiple times. Mr. Cornman stated he was not aware of any situation where Mr. Galloway was required to change any information on a report (as alleged by Mr. Copeland in his interview), but that Code's new manager has implemented new procedures with oversight on

writing reports due to Code Officers putting their opinions in reports rather than facts, which could have been what Mr. Galloway was referring to.

Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry later complained that Code Officers improperly identified him as the complainant on the Copelands' Code Case. Mr. Cornman stated the only Code employee he is aware of that said anything close to identifying Commissioner Curry was Mr. Galloway by referencing the Copelands' "neighbor" shortly before Mr. Galloway turned his body camera off. Mr. Cornman stated Ms. Adkinson in HR investigated Commissioner Curry's complaint, spoke with Ms. Copeland and determined that no Policies had been violated and there was nothing else HR needed to pursue. Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry being identified as the complainant by Mr. Galloway should not have happened, but Mr. Cornman was not aware of any specific Policy that would have been violated in such circumstances. Mr. Cornman stated he asked each Code Officer whether anyone had told the Copelands that Commissioner Curry was the complainant, and each denied doing so. Mr. Cornman stated all Code Officers had their body cameras on at the Copelands' Property except for the one instance with Mr. Galloway. Commissioner Curry has suggested Ms. Hicks also improperly identified him as the complainant. In response, Mr. Cornman stated Ms. Hicks reported to him that Mr. Copeland told her about rebar on Commissioner Curry's property and that, in response, Ms. Hicks pointed to the rebar and asked if that was what Mr. Copeland was referring to.

Mr. Cornman stated he asked Commissioner Curry how he would have responded if Mr. Cornman had simply ignored Commissioner Curry's calls and texts regarding the Copelands' Property. Mr. Cornman stated that in hindsight, he should have told Commissioner Curry to file a Code case through ordinary Code procedures, but at the time he was attempting to maintain a workable relationship with Commissioner Curry. Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry told him neighbors came to him with the complaints about the Copelands' Property, and the right thing for a Commissioner to do in response would have been to send them to Code to file a complaint.

When asked about Code's practice of addressing additional violations observed at a property, Mr. Cornman stated that if a Code Officer responds to a complaint at a particular location and clearly observes another violation at that same property, Code attempts to address the additional violation as well so that officers do not need to return repeatedly to the same location. Mr. Cornman stated that this is a directive given to Code Officers and that it is in the process of being added to Code's standard operating procedures. Mr. Cornman clarified this practice is specific to the property being investigated and would not apply to neighboring properties unless a separate Code complaint is filed against such other property.

When asked about Commissioner Curry's public criticism of Code in the August 2025 BCC meeting related to uncollected fines, Mr. Cornman stated Code has fulfilled its role by placing liens on affected properties, but that the BCC had not implemented a foreclosure process to enforce those liens. Mr. Cornman further stated that he was working with Legal to develop a resolution to that issue.

Mr. Cornman stated that when Code issues a Notice of Violation, the notice informs the property owner of the corrective action required and establishes a deadline for bringing the property into compliance. He further clarified that a property owner seeking a variance must proceed through Planning.

Mr. Cornman stated Code investigating the Currys' Property was a direct result of the Copelands' complaint[41] as opposed to any animus or proactive enforcement or encouragement of such by another towards Commissioner Curry. Mr. Cornman stated he believed one hundred percent (100%) that no one in Code had any ill intent or motives in connection with the investigation of the Currys' Property.

e) Brian Kellenberger – February 13, 2026

HGRS interviewed Mr. Kellenberger on February 13, 2026. Mr. Kellenberger is the County Administrator. Mr. Kellenberger stated he became involved in this matter when Commissioner Curry began making complaints against Code. Speaking about Code generally, Mr. Kellenberger stated the purpose of Code is not to "get people in trouble," but to get people into compliance (with the LDC), and that there is always an opportunity to cure a LDC violation.

Mr. Kellenberger stated Commissioners are not supposed to involve themselves in day-to-day[42] operations of the County. Mr. Kellenberger stated he and Commissioner Curry recently met with a concerned couple that were claiming they had not been treated appropriately by Code. Mr. Kellenberger stated this was a classic case of two feuding neighbors using Code as a vehicle for the dispute, but questioned Commissioner Curry's involvement and role in the situation.

Mr. Kellenberger stated that notifying a Department Director about conditions at a specific property may fall within a Commissioner's role in circumstances involving an immediate public health or safety concern, such as an active sewage leak. He stated, however, that it would not be appropriate to use County resources or personnel to pursue a personal dispute with a neighbor. Mr. Kellenberger further stated that, although Commissioner Curry may have attempted to characterize the complaints regarding the Copelands' Property as having originated with neighbors, Mr. Kellenberger believed Commissioner Curry was using his position as a Commissioner, together with County resources and personnel, to address personal grievances.

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[41] Mr. Cornman recalled the Copelands had previously filed a Code complaint against another neighbor regarding a shed and fence on the property and recalled Commissioner Curry making comments about Mr. Copeland pushing the fence over.

[42] As more fully described herein below, on September 4, 2015, at the request of the Office of the State Attorney, a grand jury was adjourned to review the operations and policies of the County. Among other findings from the 2015 Grand Jury Report, the Grand Jury found that, "County Commissioners should not be involved in the day-to-day operations of the County." *See* **Ex. 36**, pg. 6. Commissioners' involvement in the day-to-day operations of the County, generally, has been an ongoing discussion throughout the County for many years.

Mr. Kellenberger stated Mr. Cornman[43] did what any other Department Director would have done in treating Commissioners Curry's complaints against the Copelands as "sensitive." Mr. Kellenberger stated that Mr. Cornman may have "stretched" the Florida Statute that allows for an anonymous complaint but understood that Mr. Cornman was trying to keep peace with Commissioner Curry. Mr. Kellenberger stated a Code Officer went to the Copelands' Property and the case was closed because there was not a non-compliance situation. Mr. Kellenberger stated there were other Code cases closed out at the Copelands' Property because they came into compliance. Mr. Kellenberger stated that Mr. Galloway turning off his body camera and then lying was a bad decision and noted Mr. Galloway quit before he was terminated from his employment.

Mr. Kellenberger stated that he did not believe Code instructed the Copelands to file complaints regarding the Currys' Property. Rather, he stated that Code acted appropriately by informing the Copelands that, if they wished to pursue a complaint, they could do so through the established process. Mr. Kellenberger explained that advising citizens of the complaint process is part of a Code Officer's responsibilities.

Mr. Kellenberger stated Commissioner Curry has made social media posts that, in Mr. Kellenberger's view, were antagonistic toward Code, and that Commissioner Curry had also submitted public-records requests for Code body-camera footage. Mr. Kellenberger stated there has been an increase in Commissioner Curry's "social media shaming" of Code. Mr. Kellenberger stated Commissioner Curry goes live on Facebook with videos involving day-to-day issues of the County. Mr. Kellenberger raised concerns regarding public record regulations related to Commissioner Curry allegedly blocking people on social media.

Mr. Kellenberger stated in February 2026 Commissioner Curry asked him for the address to the Beach Code Operations facility. Mr. Kellenberger stated the next morning he received a text from Commissioner Curry with a picture of the Code building asking why a public facility with a public office was behind a locked and closed gate. Mr. Kellenberger stated he responded to Commissioner Curry that his understanding was that Code keeps the gate closed and locked during non-operational hours as stated on the gate and asked whether Commissioner Curry found the gate to be locked and closed during operational hours. Mr. Kellenberger further stated that he told Commissioner Curry he would arrange for Commissioner Curry to be added to the gate access system.

Mr. Kellenberger stated Commissioner Curry sent him an email about four (4) County facilities allegedly not in compliance with the LDC and that Commissioner Curry was going to file complaints regarding these properties. Mr. Kellenberger stated Commissioner Curry sent Mr. Kellenberger photos of a wood storage rack, gas container, and other items that Mr. Kellenberger believes do not require permits. Mr. Kellenberger stated Commissioner Curry also emailed him and other County employees stating the County needed to put out a public service announcement

[43] Mr. Kellenberger stated he was aware that Mr. Cornman filed an ethics complaint against Commissioner Curry and had asked for whistleblower protection.

("PSA") for accessory buildings to inform people of the requirement to obtained a survey and permit for their sheds. Mr. Kellenberger stated at this point, Commissioner Curry had already received his variance, but it was a "sore spot" with Commissioner Curry that he was forced to expend money to get the variance. Mr. Kellenberger stated Commissioner Curry then put out a PSA on Facebook stating if citizens want to get a doghouse, they have to get a building permit, which Mr. Kellenberger stated was not true. Mr. Kellenberger stated Mr. Schoen told Commissioner Curry the PSA was not a good idea because Commissioner Curry did not understand all the LDC requirements, and Mr. Kellenberger agreed that Commissioner Curry did not have a good understanding of the LDC. Mr. Kellenberger stated that the PSA at issue consisted of a video and photographs of the Beach Operations facility and the Code office, together with a claim that their accessory buildings were not properly permitted. He further stated that two accessory structures at the Beach Operations facility were implicated: a temporary storage building from the recently completed Grayton Beach project and a Rubbermaid shed. According to Mr. Kellenberger, in 2008 the then-Planning Director determined that the Beach Operations facility was not required to obtain building permits for sheds because the property is State-owned rather than County-owned.

Mr. Kellenberger stated at some point someone made a claim that Commissioner Curry was not required to pay a fee at Planning related to his variance, but that this was a misunderstanding regarding a Planning employee helping Commissioner Curry to set up his Planning account, which this employee does for a lot of citizens. Mr. Kellenberger stated Mr. Copeland claims to have documentation of correspondence between Commissioner Curry the former chairman of the ZBA, in the weeks, days and hours before Commissioner Curry's ZBA hearing.

Mr. Kellenberger stated Senior Planner Mr. Baronti was handling Commissioner Curry's variance application, and that Mr. Baronti and Commissioner Curry got into an argument at the end of a ZBA meeting. Mr. Kellenberger stated Mr. Baronti made a comment that he was frustrated and had a year and a half left (working for the County), and that Commissioner Curry construed the comment to mean that Mr. Baronti did not care about his job and should be terminated.

Mr. Kellenberger stated Mr. Copeland, Mr. Cornman and Mr. Baronti have each filed complaints[44] against Commissioner Curry.

f) Breezy Adkinson - February 17, 2026

HGRS interviewed Ms. Adkinson on February 17, 2026. Ms. Adkinson is the Employee Relations Manager in the HR Department. Ms. Adkinson stated she had limited involvement in this matter in comparison to other County employees but was the HR employee responsible for handling Mr. Galloway's discipline for violations related to his body camera footage, and she

[44] Mr. Kellenberger did not differentiate or clarify which complaints were made to HR and/or Administration and which complaints were made to the Ethics Commission.

spoke with Ms. Copeland related to Code's visits to the Copelands' Property. Ms. Adkinson stated she asked Ms. Copeland if any of the Code Officers spoke negatively about Commissioner Curry, to which Ms. Copeland responded no.

g) Uriel Baza – February 19, 2026

HGRS interviewed Mr. Baza on February 19, 2026. Mr. Baza is the Code Officer that was assigned to the Curry Code Case. Mr. Baza stated he was not involved with the LDC violations reported at the Copelands' Property, but he did drive past the Copelands' Property one time while on a Saturday or Sunday shift per his supervisor's direction to confirm there was nothing improperly placed in the right of way. Mr. Baza stated he did not observe any such items in the right-of-way when he drove past the Copelands' Property.

Mr. Baza explained that once someone submits a complaint to Code, it gets assigned to one of the six (6) Street Code Officers on a rotation. Mr. Baza stated after he is assigned to a case he receives an email informing him of his assignment and studies what potential violation has been reported. Mr. Baza stated Code Officers not only investigate if the reported potential violation is actually in violation of the LDC, but they also determine if there are any other readily apparent LDC violations on that property. Mr. Baza stated he conducts a field inspection, gathers photos from public areas he is allowed to be in without trespassing, and sometimes he will communicate with Planning to ask for their opinion on an LDC violation. Mr. Baza stated once there is evidence of a LDC violation, Code will post a Notice of Violation on the property.

Mr. Baza stated that he began his investigation of the Currys' Property by conducting an on-site field inspection. He further stated that, through Planning documents, he confirmed that the Currys' shed had been placed within the setback. Mr. Baza stated that the driveway was later determined to be non-compliant because the LDC permits only a limited driveway width. He also stated that an additional violation existed at the Currys' Property involving rods placed in the right-of-way near the stop sign at the corner of the property, which were later removed.

Mr. Baza stated he went to Commissioner Curry's office with Mr. Cornman to hand deliver the Notice of Violation regarding the Currys' Property to Commissioner Curry and to explain the steps necessary to bring the property into compliance. Mr. Baza stated he or Mr. Cornman told Commissioner Curry to consult with Planning to get better guidance regarding the variance process. Mr. Baza stated he never spoke to Ms. Curry. Mr. Baza stated he emailed Commissioner Curry regarding extensions (to come into compliance with the LDC) after learning Commissioner Curry was trying to obtain a variance through Planning. Mr. Baza stated he was then out of the office due to knee surgery, but once he returned Commissioner Curry had obtained a variance. Mr. Baza stated Code is not involved in the variance process except to monitor whether a property owner is seeking a variance for purposes of compliance extensions and whether the property owner is complying with any variance granted. Mr. Baza stated that Commissioner Curry had completed most of the items requested by Planning, but that, at the time of the interview, he was awaiting an as-built survey before closing the case.

When asked about Code's policy for addressing additional violations at a property, Mr. Baza stated that Code is generally complaint-driven with respect to sheds. He further stated that

Code may act proactively in matters involving public health or safety concerns, such as clearing or preservation issues. Mr. Baza stated if it is not a public safety and health issue, Code is only reactive to formal complaints. Mr. Baza stated Code can act proactively with regard to a Code issue on a property that has a sperate Code complaint for the purpose of efficiency so they do not have to go back to one property multiple times on different issues.

h) Georgina Hicks – February 24, 2026

HGRS interviewed Ms. Hicks on February 24, 2026. Ms. Hicks is a Code Supervisor and oversees three (3) of the six (6) Street Code Officers. Ms. Hicks stated Code is a reactive, complaint driven Department. Ms. Hicks said there is "some proactive leeway" for environmentally sensitive conditions such as clearings, signage in the right of way, public safety, health safety and other Code issues that do not require a complainant listed on the case.

Ms. Hicks stated she was the Code Supervisor assigned the Copelands' Code Case, and she oversaw Mr. Galloway on the case. Ms. Hicks stated Mr. Galloway was assigned to the Copeland Code Case when there was a question of whether a pipe (or something similar) was placed in the wetland area at the Copelands' Property. Ms. Hicks stated the Copelands' Code Case was environmentally sensitive because of the allegation regarding the wetland buffer. Ms. Hicks stated there were questions regarding the property survey/site plan on where the wetlands began, where they were sodded, and if they needed to be restored or cleared based on the survey/site plan for the Copelands' Property. Ms. Hicks stated she and Mr. Galloway discussed the Copelands' survey/site plan in depth and scheduled an appointment with the environmental planner, Mr. Bohn, for them to all visit the Copelands' Property together. Ms. Hicks stated while at the Copelands' Property it was determined that because of the sodding and where natural vegetation stopped, there was no LDC violation. Ms. Hicks stated there was a structure on the Copelands' Property that resembled a child's sandbox, but no LDC violation was found. Ms. Hicks stated she and Mr. Galloway discussed the Copelands' Code Case further when a question regarding permitting for a septic tank arose. Ms. Hicks stated she researched the issue and determined that the company that installed the septic tank did not pull the required permit. Ms. Hicks stated the required permit for the septic tank was subsequently pulled, and Mr. Galloway closed the Copelands' Code Case.

Ms. Hicks stated that Mr. Bennett was working on a Saturday and was asked to go to the Copelands' Property to investigate a portable toilet and/or dump trailer that was placed in the right of way. Ms. Hicks stated Mr. Bennett posted a Notice of Removal as a result. Ms. Hicks stated there were a few more times she received phone calls or text messages and in response sent Mr. Galloway to the Copelands' Property to address issues such as the dump trailer in the right of way and parking near a fire hydrant. Ms. Hicks stated Mr. Galloway never reopened the case because a rapport had been established with the Copelands' and the Copelands knew Code was coming to address complaints. Ms. Hicks stated the Copelands were not happy about Code coming to their property, but they would comply with the instruction given by Code. Ms. Hicks stated there may have been two (2) times that she drove by the Copelands' Property without stopping and getting out of the vehicle.

Ms. Hicks stated she did not know there was a contentious issue between the Copelands and the Currys until the Copelands filed a Code complaint against the Currys, but she was aware Commissioner Curry was sending texts and pictures to Mr. Cornman because Mr. Cornman would forward them to her for her to investigate. Ms. Hicks stated she did not use Commissioner Curry's name when speaking to the Copelands, but that the Copelands already knew the Currys made the complaints. Ms. Hicks stated she did not think Commissioner Curry could be upset about his name allegedly being used because he was texting Mr. Cornman, which is a part of public record.

Ms. Hicks stated it is not uncommon for property owners that are cited for LDC violations to point out other LDC violations in their neighborhood. Ms. Hicks stated in these cases Code Officers inform the property owner that if they would like to file a Code complaint, they need to call the Code office, give their information, and a Case will be assigned. Ms. Hicks said she cannot speak for every Code Officer, but in her experience, this is actually a very common occurrence, and ninety-five percent (95%) of the cases she work on have a similar fact pattern, especially when it comes to neighbors. Ms. Hicks stated telling property owners how to file a Code complaint is very common, but that it would be uncommon for Code Officers to encourage people to file complaints because it creates a negative environment which Code Officers have to address when dealing with dueling neighbors. Ms. Hicks stated dealing with neighbors places undue stress on a Code Officer because of the hostility and bantering, which negatively impacts Code Officers trying to do their jobs. Ms. Hicks stated she never would have suggested to or encouraged the Copelands to file a case against the Currys.

When asked about the policy for addressing additional Code violations found at a property proactively, Ms. Hicks stated this was created because Code Officers would investigate a property only as to what was complained about, and then the same property would have additional alleged violations that would be reported. Ms. Hicks stated Code is growing and improving as a department, and this was something previously identified that Code could do a better job of for efficiency. Ms. Hicks stated this policy did not have anything to do with Commissioner Curry and was in place before the dispute between the Copelands and the Currys began.

When asked about Mr. Galloway's body camera footage, Ms. Hicks stated she flagged Mr. Galloway's body camera footage after initially reviewing it because she did not know why his camera was turned off. Ms. Hicks stated Mr. Cornman asked her for Mr. Galloway's body camera videos, and she put them on a thumb drive and gave them to Mr. Cornman. Ms. Hicks stated Mr. Cornman asked her for her thoughts on the footage, and she stated she thought the camera had been intentionally turned off. Ms. Hicks stated she questioned Mr. Galloway and he denied turning the camera off but later said he remembered the camera was chirping and died. Ms. Hicks said at that point Ms. Adkinson in HR became involved. Ms. Hicks stated she thought this was something Mr. Galloway took upon himself to do (intentionally turning off the camera), and although she thought Mr. Galloway was probably trying to be helpful and act as a peacekeeper, it was a bad choice.

Ms. Hicks stated she is Mr. Baza's supervisor, but that she never went with Mr. Baza onto the Currys' Property or spoke directly with the Currys. Ms. Hicks stated she reviewed documents related to the Currys' Property with Mr. Baza, and Code conducted business as usual on the Curry Code Case, as they would for any other property. Ms. Hicks stated she has not had any other interactions with Commissioner Curry other than additional (unrelated to this Investigation) property owners approaching Commissioner Curry to request meetings and alleging that Code was "being mean" to them. Ms. Hicks stated Code has been under a microscope because of Commissioner Curry being involved. Ms. Hicks stated Commissioner Curry is targeting Code and the County alleging that Code does not follow its own rules. Ms. Hicks stated Commissioner Curry said he was trying to speak for the people and make a complaint against the Copelands, and then turned the entire situation around on Code, "airing dirty laundry" and unjustifiably calling out other County Departments.

Ms. Hicks stated there was no selective enforcement of LDC violations against Commissioner Curry because, at the end of the day, there were, in fact, violations at his property. Ms. Hicks stated Code gave Commissioner Curry additional time to come into compliance and to obtain his variances, which is something they do not usually afford to other citizens. Ms. Hicks stated Commissioner Curry was not retaliated against in any way by Code.

When asked about Commissioner Curry's public criticism of Code in the August 2025 BCC meeting related to uncollected fines, Ms. Hicks stated that when she started working for the County five (5) years ago she was tasked with updating Code's digital record keeping. Ms. Hicks stated the plan was broken out in phases, and because nothing was in place when she started, the entire program had to be built from the ground up. Ms. Hicks stated she had been working with Mr. Cornman on the process of getting the fines calculated and applied correctly, and that it has been a beneficial and productive process, despite taking a long time. Ms. Hicks stated the Magistrate, not Code, adjudicates Code fines.

i) Michael Gainey – March 24, 2026

HGRS interviewed Deputy Director of Code Mr. Gainey on March 24, 2026. Mr. Gainey was interviewed after he submitted an Ethics Complaint against Commissioner Curry on February 27, 2026. Mr. Gainey submitted an additional complaint to the Ethics Commission and to Administration on March 19, 2026.

Mr. Gainey stated after he filed his Ethics Complaint against Commissioner Curry, Commissioner Curry posted a video on Facebook discussing and "making fun of" the allegations and admitting he did the things alleged in the Ethics Complaint. Mr. Gainey stated subsequently, on a Saturday, Commissioner Curry posted a copy of the ethics complaint with Mr. Gainey's personal information and home address on the "Friends of Dan Curry D1 commissioner" Facebook page. Mr. Gainey stated his personal information and home address remained on Facebook until the following Monday. Mr. Gainey stated Commissioner Curry then reposted the Ethics Complaint with Mr. Gainey's information redacted. Mr. Gainey stated he worked for WCSO for twenty-five

(25) years in certain roles, so his personal information is protected. Mr. Gainey stated having his personal information and home address published online impacted him and his family in regard to their safety because of his prior role with the WCSO. Mr. Gainey stated it is intimidation to publish such protected information, such posting the Ethics Complaint with his home address on it.

Mr. Gainey stated one of the reasons he filed his Ethics Complaint against Commissioner Curry was because he and other employees in Code, such as Ms. Jefferies, had recognized how badly Code Officers did not want to be involved in Code cases because of Commissioner Curry, and how stressed out and anxious Code Officers were becoming about being assigned to cases Commissioner Curry had some involvement in. Mr. Gainey stated Commissioner Curry has been improperly interjecting himself into Code cases, like the Hollands and the Hackers[45]. Mr. Gainey stated Commissioner Curry improperly involves himself in the day-to-day operations of the County.

Mr. Gainey stated as the Deputy Director of Code, he is present at ninety-eight percent (98%) of the meetings Mr. Cornman has with Commissioner Curry and that he and Mr. Cornman usually meet with Commissioners together. When asked about the genesis of Commissioner Curry's issues with the Copelands and Code, Mr. Gainey stated Commissioner Curry started texting Mr. Cornman about a neighbor's (the Copelands) property, and Code opened a case based on those texts because of a pump allegedly being located on the Copelands' Property in a restricted area. Mr. Gainey stated because it was an environmental issue, they did not have to label Commissioner Curry as the complainant as a courtesy to Commissioner Curry.

Mr. Gainey stated when he met with Commissioner Curry in subsequent meetings, Commissioner Curry made statements that made Mr. Gainey feel "awkward," such as complaining about having to spend $1,500 to get a variance. Mr. Gainey stated Commissioner Curry indicated that Code was "causing him problems." Mr. Gainey stated one day Commissioner Curry was complaining about being identified as the complainant (on the Copelands's Code Case) and claimed he did not actually make a complaint. Mr. Gainey stated Mr. Cornman asked Commissioner Curry what he would have done if Code had not opened a case in response to his complaints, and that Commissioner Curry diverted from answering the question and changed the topic. Mr. Gainey stated at every meeting he had with Commissioner Curry after the Curry Code Case started, Commissioner Curry made some kind of jab at Code.

Mr. Gainey further stated that one day when he met with Mr. Cornman and Commissioner Curry for a standard pre-BCC meeting at Commissioner Curry's office, Commissioner Curry took a pistol and placed it on the table in front of him, somewhat pointed towards Mr. Gainey. Mr.

[45] The Hackers own property in the County and have had ongoing disputes with Code. While it is somewhat unclear how or why Commissioner Curry has become involved in the Hackers' Code case, it is alleged by many County employees that Commissioner Curry has involved himself in the day-to-day operational issues of the County by way of his involvement with the Hackers' Code case.

Gainey stated that this made him extremely uncomfortable, and that after a minute or two of the pistol being pointed at him, Commissioner Curry moved the pistol. Mr. Gainey stated he believed Commissioner Curry knew Mr. Gainey was uncomfortable with the pistol being displayed and pointed in his direction on the table, and that Commissioner Curry did this as an intimidation tactic. Mr. Gainey stated he did not include this incident in his Ethics Complaint.

Mr. Gainey stated he believed Commissioner Curry requested an investigation into Code regarding Buddy Burgess[46] and similar to the body camera issue with Mr. Galloway, Commissioner Curry has alleged Code cannot handle their employees properly.

Mr. Gainey stated Commissioner Curry's continued retaliatory actions against Code are significantly impacting Code employees' ability to do their jobs, and that some Code employees are, in fact, "scared" to do their job because of Commissioner Curry. Mr. Gainey stated, for example, one Code Officer picked up signs[47] in the median of Highway 98, which Commissioner Curry voted in favor of in a BCC meeting, but then posted memes about Code on Facebook and manipulated the situation to make Code look bad for doing what Commissioner Curry voted for Code to do. Mr. Gainey stated this was very upsetting to the Code Officer who picked up the signs, and that someone disclosed her name on Facebook[48].

Mr. Gainey stated Code was not proactive against Commissioner Curry because there was a complaint made by the Copelands. Mr. Gainey stated Commissioner Curry posting on Facebook a suggestion and invitation for anyone who has an issue with Code to show up to a BCC meeting is harassment and intimidation.

j) Bob Baronti – March 25, 2026

HGRS interviewed Mr. Baronti on March 25, 2026. Mr. Baronti is a Senior Planner in Planning. Mr. Baronti stated he has been employed with the County for thirty-five (35) years. Mr. Baronti stated at the time Commissioner Curry applied for his variance, he was the only staff member in Planning handling variance applications.

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[46] As noted herein above, Buddy Burgess is a former Code employee.

[47] The signs at issue were "snipe signs" - temporary signs typically attached to utility poles, trees, or fences or placed in the ground in public rights-of-way, primarily for purposes of advertisement or political campaigns. Snipe signs are commonly considered a public nuisance. On November 24, 2025, the BCC unanimously voted in favor of Code enforcing scenic corridor standards proactively again, after enforcement had been paused for a reason unrelated to this Investigation. As a part of this enforcement, Code Officers are tasked with removing snipe signs from the right of way of the scenic corridors, including Highways 98 and 30A. *See* **Ex. 35**. In this instance, a Code Officer picked up yard sale signs from the right of way of Highway 98, which is the duty of a Code Officer.

[48] Mr. Gainey clarified he did not believe Commissioner Curry was the person that identified this Code Officer by name on Facebook.

Mr. Baronti stated Commissioner Curry had received a substantial LDC violation and was told he needed to get a variance. Mr. Baronti stated during pre-application meetings he sits down with an applicant for a variance and goes over what needs to be done (to obtain a variance). Mr. Baronti stated during Commissioner Curry's pre-application meeting, Commissioner Curry "balked at" anything Mr. Baronti suggested needed to be done for the Curry Variance Application. Mr. Baronti stated Commission Curry "pitched a fit" about having to get the variance, stating that it was "stupid" and that he had emails from the Public Works Department ("Public Works") saying he did not have to get a variance. Mr. Baronti stated the emails from Public Works did not reflect Commissioner Curry's statements, and he told Commissioner Curry the requirements are in the LDC and a variance is required, at which point Commissioner Curry started working on his application. Mr. Baronti stated he went to Commissioner Cury's office and spent over three (3) hours telling him exactly what to do for the Curry Variance Application. Mr. Baronti stated Commissioner Cury told him it was too burdensome and that he was exempt and should not have to get the variance.

Mr. Baronti also stated that Commissioner Curry told him that "heads would roll" and that "there would be some changes" if Commissioner Curry did not receive his variance. Mr. Baronti stated if Commissioner Curry was asked about these comments, he would likely try to characterize them as jokes.

Mr. Baronti stated the information for ZBA hearings is published in the newspaper and anyone can come speak at a hearing. Mr. Baronti stated he showed Commissioner Curry examples of the mail outs required, told him that they must be certified, and gave him a sample to copy that Commissioner Curry would only need to slightly change. Mr. Baronti stated Commissioner Curry did not meet the mail out notice requirements and Mr. Copeland contested that proper notice of the ZBA hearing was not given because it did not adequately describe the requested variance.

Mr. Baronti stated when it comes to Planning staff reports, traditionally, for ninety-nine percent (99%) of requested variances, a denial is recommended because Planning believes LDC should be followed. Mr. Baronti stated the staff report on the Curry Variance Application indeed did not support the variance. Mr. Baronti stated the ZBA is separate from Planning staff, and that ninety-five percent (95%) of the time the ZBA grants variances despite staff recommending denial. Mr. Baronti stated there was no doubt in his mind that Commissioner Curry would get his variance because of the way the ZBA works and because of the political connection between Commissioner Curry and Mr. Johnson, the then-Chairman of the ZBA.

Mr. Baronti stated at the end of one meeting related to the Curry Variance Application, Commissioner Curry approached Mr. Baronti and stated that he had identified one hundred (100) other non-compliant driveways in the County and that Commissioner Curry was going to tell these people they had to get a variance. Mr. Baronti stated he responded by saying he only had a year left working for the County, but he would handle as many variance requests as he could. Mr. Baronti stated there were witnesses to this conversation. Mr. Baronti stated Commissioner Curry

then claimed Mr. Baronti said, "bring it on I only have one year left" and made a negative Facebook post about him.

Mr. Baronti further stated Commissioner Curry started "threatening" him, so he preemptively spoke to HR, and that HR Director Tarey Franxman ("Mr. Franxman") and Ms. Adkinson investigated the issue and determined that Mr. Baronti did nothing wrong. Mr. Baronti clarified he was trying to say he only had a year left, so he would work on as many variance applications as he could get to during that time. Mr. Baronti stated after this he asked Mr. Schoen to allow him to be removed from Commissioner Curry's Variance Application, and that Mr. Schoen agreed.

Mr. Baronti stated he was aware of a situation where Commissioner Curry made someone in Planning take a document out of his variance application file. Mr. Baronti stated it was a bill for a survey and that the surveyor did not want to be identified as having anything to do with Commissioner Curry's variance. Mr. Baronti stated Commissioner Curry directed two female Planning employees to remove the document from the file and that it was improper and unethical to cause the removal of a public record from a file once it was submitted as part of that file.

Mr. Baronti stated Commissioner Curry "did not like it" when he was told he had to go through the BPR process for his shed and that Mr. Kellenberger had to get involved. Mr. Baronti stated the LDC does say that a shed that is under 400 square feet and that is not in South Walton is exempt from permits.

Mr. Baronti stated Commissioner Curry bullies and posts negative videos about County employees, which is unacceptable. Mr. Baronti stated Commissioner Curry has made negative Facebook posts about Code and a video complaining that the outside of Commissioner Curry's office building is dirty, but the outside of the Planning building is clean. Mr. Baronti stated he has contemplated filing an ethics complaint with the Ethics Commission against Commissioner Curry, but after seeing what Commissioner Curry is doing to others on Facebook, he does not want to.

k) Brian Kellenberger – March 25, 2026

HGRS conducted a follow up interview with Mr. Kellenberger on March 25, 2026. Mr. Kellenberger stated two (2) Ethics Complaints were filed against Commissioner Curry by County employees - one by Mr. Cornman and the other by Mr. Gainey. Mr. Kellenberger stated that prior to Mr. Cornman and Mr. Gainey filing their complaints with the Ethics Commission, they informed Mr. Kellenberger that they intended to do so. Mr. Kellenberger stated once Commissioner Curry was notified of the Ethics Complaints, Mr. Kellenberger spoke with Commissioner Curry and discussed that it was probably not a good idea for Commissioner Curry to continue to meet with Mr. Gainey and Mr. Cornman until the issues were resolved.

Mr. Kellenberger stated the complaints against Commissioner Curry regarding retaliation against Code employees places Mr. Kellenberger in a difficult position as County Administrator

because there is no disciplinary action that the County can take against an elected official, as such disciplinary action is within the sole purview of the Governor. When asked if Commissioners are required to follow County Policies, Mr. Kellenberger stated in some cases they are, such as when the Policies address a Commissioners' aide or tuition reimbursement. Mr. Kellenberger contended it was not proper for Commissioner Curry to post Mr. Gainey's personal information and home address on social media, but that Administration cannot do anything to an elected official other than attempt to help them understand best practices.

Mr. Kellenberger noted that some of the items Commissioner Curry requested related to County-owned properties are not typically part of a project file (for example, not every project requires an as-built survey, permits, or development orders).

When asked about the BPR process, Mr. Kellenberger stated that before Commissioner Curry's issues arose, he and Mr. Schoen started an assessment of the LDC and the processes one must go through when building in the County. Mr. Kellenberger stated he and Mr. Schoen identified redundancies and duplications of information and items that were not necessary. Mr. Kellenberger stated one of those items was requirements for accessory structures related to the BPR process. Mr. Kellenberger stated Building does not require a permit for a structure that is less than 400 square feet, does not need electrical or plumbing permits, and that is not located in South Walton. Mr. Kellenberger stated due to different conditions in different parts of the County, some areas have more stringent requirements such as buffer protection zones, corridors, bay shore protection zones, wetland protection zones, and wildlife areas. Mr. Kellenberger stated after this had already been identified, Commissioner Curry began making an issue with Planning and making statements that every time he goes to Planning it costs him money. Mr. Kellenberger stated up until this point, he thought the BPR process Commissioner Curry was undergoing was associated with confirming the setbacks on the Granted Curry Variance. Mr. Kellenberger stated he downloaded a copy of the Granted Curry Variance, the BPR, and other relevant information and determined the Currys' shed was less than 400 square feet, did not require electrical or plumbing permits, and that the Currys' property was in a flood X zone, so that his shed did not need an As Built Survey and did not need to go through the BPR process. Mr. Kellenberger ultimately determined that the Currys' should be relieved of those requirements.

Mr. Kellenberger stated Commissioner Curry is involved in the Hollands' Code case because Commissioner Curry believes he should have oversight and facilitate that issue. Mr. Kellenberger stated he believes County staff should be handling the Hollands' issues, not Commissioner Curry. Mr. Kellenberger stated that although County Commissioners have certain oversight over County functions, Commissioner Curry's concerns should be relayed through the appropriate channels. Mr. Kellenberger stated Commissioner Curry's activities are improperly bleeding into day-to-day operations of the County, especially when he put a "call out" on Facebook for people that have issues with Code. Mr. Kellenberger also stated he believed Commissioner Curry's involvement in the Hackers' Code case is improper. Mr. Kellenberger clarified he was not stating a Commissioner cannot discuss a constituent's concerns with the constituent, but that those concerns need to ultimately be referred to Administration to address. Mr. Kellenberger stated he

believes Commissioner Curry has invited the Hackers to his office and has been coaching them on their Code case in an effort to create a case that Code and Planning are engaging in selective enforcement.

Mr. Kellenberger stated that although Commissioner Curry involved himself in social media posts related to Buddy Burgess and Jim Holloway, Commissioner Curry had no involvement in Mr. Kellenberger's decision to ask for an investigation.

l) Stephen Schoen – March 26, 2026

HGRS interviewed Mr. Schoen on March 26, 2026. Mr. Schoen is the Director of Planning, and he stated as Director, he has very little to do with individual applications for variances. Mr. Schoen stated that, absent meetings in front of the ZBA, he has no intimate knowledge of what has happened with the Curry Variance Application.

Mr. Schoen stated there was a request made by Commissioner Curry to remove an uploaded invoice or receipt for services from a local engineer that Commissioner Curry hired related to the Curry Variance Application from the submitted file. Mr. Schoen stated the Planning front desk staff followed Commissioner Curry's request and removed the document from the project portal. Mr. Schoen stated he informed the Planning staff it was inappropriate to remove the document because it is a public document and to find the document for the record. Mr. Schoen stated he understood why Planning staff removed the document - because a Commissioner asked them to. Mr. Schoen stated if any member of the public would have made the same request the Planning staff would not have acquiesced.

Mr. Schoen stated he did not know why Commissioner Curry was at the meeting with the Hollands (which Mr. Schoen was present for) or any meeting with the Hackers, but that it may have been Commissioner Curry attempting to facilitate conversations based on members of the public reaching out.

Mr. Schoen stated he was not present for any of the issues between Commissioner Curry and Mr. Baronti. Mr. Schoen stated, at the time, Mr. Baronti was the only person in Planning responsible for variance applications. Mr. Schoen stated that prior to Commissioner Curry's ZBA hearing, Mr. Baronti asked him what the expectations were when dealing with Commissioner Curry due to his status as a Commissioner. Mr. Schoen stated he informed Mr. Baronti that Commissioner Curry needed to be treated like any other member of the public. Mr. Schoen stated he was aware that Mr. Baronti and Commissioner Curry met during the variance application process, and that Mr. Baronti expressed to Mr. Schoen trepidation and anxiety about conversations he had with Commissioner Curry. Mr. Schoen stated Mr. Baronti told him Commissioner Curry was not happy with what Mr. Baronti was requesting, was not happy with the documentation needed for a variance, and that Commissioner Curry was irritated and acting gruff. Mr. Schoen stated he was also aware that there was a disagreement between Commissioner Curry and Mr. Baronti based on statements made at a ZBA meeting, and that Mr. Baronti told Mr. Schoen

Commissioner Curry got in Mr. Baronti's face and was intimidating with his body language. Mr. Schoen stated after that incident, Mr. Baronti requested not to be involved with Commissioner Curry's Variance Application and that he did not want to serve on the ZBA because of conflicts between Mr. Baronti and Commissioner Curry.

When asked about Commissioner Curry's request to Planning regarding County-owned properties, Mr. Schoen stated Planning staff is working on putting information in a repository for Commissioner Curry.

m) Tony Cornman – March 26, 2026

HGRS conducted a follow-up interview with Mr. Cornman on March 26, 2026. During his initial February 12, 2026 interview, Mr. Cornman did not disclose to HGRS that he had already then filed an Ethics Complaint against Commissioner Curry. Mr. Cornman stated he originally gave his complaint against Commissioner Curry to the County on or around January 8, 2026. Mr. Cornman stated his January complaint stemmed from Commissioner Curry's actions during the Curry Code Case and resulting variance process. Mr. Cornman stated after Commissioner Curry's ZBA hearing, and once his Code issues were mostly resolved, Commissioner Curry began sending emails about Code violating policies such as the incident with Mr. Galloway's body camera footage. Mr. Cornman stated he spoke to Legal about his complaint against Commissioner Curry, and it was determined that the complaint needed to be submitted to the Ethics Commission. Mr. Cornman stated he made his complaint because Commissioner Curry was "attacking Code in every way he could," including by making negative social media posts about Code and posting cartoon images making fun of Code Officers.

Mr. Cornman stated on February 9, 2026, he submitted an addendum to his Ethics Complaint following Commissioner Curry's February 6, 2026 complaints regarding the Code Office gate being locked. Mr. Cornman stated on March 7, 2026, he made a request to Administration for his retaliation complaints against Commissioner Curry to be officially added to this Investigation. Mr. Cornman stated he made his March 7, 2026 complaint after reviewing Commissioner Curry's Facebook posts about Code.

Mr. Cornman stated he believed Commissioner Curry was the person who requested an investigation take place regarding the Buddy Burgess and Jim Holloway dispute because Commissioner Curry had been outspoken about the dispute on social media. Mr. Cornman stated he believed he saw on social media where Commissioner Curry was discussing Mr. Galloway's body camera footage in addition to the Buddy Burgess and Jim Holloway dispute in relation to investigations against Code[49]. Mr. Cornman stated he believed Commissioner Curry was trying to harass Code by having Code investigated regarding matters that had already been resolved.

[49] Mr. Cornman was not able to locate a copy of this social media post.

Mr. Cornman stated that throughout the Curry Code Case and variance process, Commissioner Curry continued to mention and complain that he was having to pay money for the variance. Mr. Cornman stated he spoke with Mr. Baronti, and Mr. Baronti said Commissioner Curry told him he better get his variance or "heads would roll." Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry expected preferential treatment because of his status as a Commissioner. Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry was supposed to get an As Built Survey completed but Mr. Kellenberger and Mr. Schoen waived that requirement.

When asked about the issue regarding Code and yard sale signs, Mr. Cornman stated the BCC voted 5-0 for Code to resume actively[50] enforcing scenic corridor standards, particularly as related to signage. Mr. Cornman stated snipe signs, such as yard sale signs, are in violation if they are placed the right of way in a scenic corridor, regardless of what the sign says. Mr. Cornman stated that every Saturday one (1) Code Officer is on duty, and one of their responsibilities is to ride the scenic corridors to remove snipe signs from the right of way. Mr. Cornman stated that on one particular Saturday, Code Officer Rachel Neenan ("Ms. Neenan") removed around fifty-eight (58) snipe signs in the right of way of the scenic corridor of Highway 98. Mr. Cornman stated one of the owners of the signs called Code and complained about the sign being picked up, and that Ms. Neenan told this person that she had removed the sign. Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry then posted about yard sale signs on his Facebook page and made other jabs on social media directed at Code despite previously voting with the unanimous majority to reinstate the scenic corridor standards regarding signs.

Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry organized the last meeting the County had with the owners of Horse Power Pavillion, the Hollands. Mr. Cornman stated during this meeting the Hollands called Code Officers "pedophiles." Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry is involved with the Holland's Code case because he is very good friends with the Hollands, and that he frequently posts videos on Facebook with the Hollands, including when the Hollands helped Commissioner Curry move his shed with what Mr. Cornman speculated was around a one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000.00) piece of equipment. Mr. Cornman stated in one of Commissioner Curry's videos, Commissioner Curry said the Hollands helped him move his shed for a substantial discount, and that within the last couple of weeks Commissioner Curry posted pictures of him doing work at the Horse Power Pavillion, including washing dishes. Mr. Cornman stated if Commissioner Curry keeps voting on things for the Horse Power Pavillion, it is a quid pro quo relationship, and Commissioner Curry needs to recuse himself from such votes related to the Hollands.

Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry has also been meeting with other property owners that have open Code cases, like the Hackers, and has been encouraging citizens to openly discuss their issues with Code. Mr. Cornman stated he believed Commissioner Curry became involved in the Hackers' Code case because he wants to antagonize Code. Mr. Cornman stated he

[50] Code was previously instructed to stop enforcing the County's scenic corridor standards due to an unrelated matter.

has seen the Hackers visit Commissioner Curry's office on more than one occasion. Mr. Cornman also stated there is a new Code case with a restaurant/bar in South Walton, and on March 25, 2026, Commissioner Curry posted a picture of himself with the owners of that business on Facebook *after* the Code case related to that business was open in an effort to take a jab at Code.

Mr. Cornman stated Code Officers have been "cringing" when they get a Code case involving persons they know are associated with Commissioner Curry. Mr. Cornman stated Code Officers do not want to be assigned to anything related to Commissioner Curry because they know "their name will end up on Facebook." Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry has significant poor morale issues in the Code office.

When asked about Commissioner Curry's March 10, 2026 agenda item regarding Code and Commissioner Curry's corresponding Facebook post which stated, "[i]f any of my agenda items below interest you please attend the meeting on Tuesday and share your thoughts and experiences during public comment if no motions are made. See ya Tuesday," Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry read a statement publicly at the meeting saying after talking to Legal he was pausing the agenda item because of an Ethics Complaint against him. Mr. Cornman also stated Commissioner Curry has been questioning Code's policies on driving County vehicles home.

Mr. Cornman stated in one of the meetings he and Mr. Gainey had with Commissioner Curry *after* the Curry Code Case was initiated; Commissioner Curry took his pistol out and placed it on the table. Mr. Cornman stated the pistol was pointed in the direction of Mr. Gainey, and that after a little time had passed Commissioner Curry verbally acknowledged the pistol and stated he was going to move it to a different table which he did. Mr. Cornman relayed that he felt this was an act of intimidation on the part of Commissioner Curry.

n) Tarey Franxman – March 26, 2026

HGRS interviewed Mr. Franxman on March 26, 2026. Mr. Franxman is the Director of HR. Mr. Franxman was interviewed regarding complaints HR has received regarding Commissioner Curry, and he stated County employees are having significant issues with Commissioner Curry micromanaging their duties and getting involved in County operations at the Director level and telling Directors how to run their Departments.

Mr. Franxman stated he investigated Mr. Galloway regarding the body camera footage, and after Code confirmed the body camera was in fact disabled by Mr. Galloway, HR proceeded with disciplinary action based on Mr. Galloway's actions and untruthful statements concerning the incident. Mr. Franxman stated he also investigated Mr. Baronti's complaints regarding Commissioner Curry. Mr. Franxman stated during a variance meeting, Commissioner Curry approached Mr. Baronti, and it was Mr. Baronti's opinion that Commissioner Curry threatened him that he would not have his job much longer. On the other hand, Commissioner Curry alleged Mr. Baronti acted improperly by stating he only had a year left to work for the County. Mr. Franxman stated he spoke to witnesses of the interaction and such witnesses indicated that Commissioner

Curry misrepresented the interaction between he and Mr. Baronti, and that Mr. Baronti's version of events were more accurate. Mr. Franxman stated Mr. Baronti was upset and felt intimidated by Commissioner Curry.

Mr. Franxman stated Commissioner Curry has been posting demeaning information on Facebook stating Code is incompetent, not doing a good job, and is selectively enforcing violations against him which has negatively impacted Code staff. Mr. Franxman stated Commissioner Curry specifically called out Mr. Gainey on Facebook. Mr. Franxman stated that he believes people do not want to work in Code because of the drama on social media and that Code employees are tired of being bashed by Commissioner Curry. Mr. Franxman stated there has been a struggle to fill positions in Code and people have quit because they are tired of the social media posts making Code and its employees appear incompetent. Mr. Franxman further stated that when trying to fill positions at Code, either externally or internally, employees and potential employees have reported they do not want to work for Code because of Commissioner Curry.

Mr. Franxman stated multiple Department Directors have expressed that they are concerned about Commissioner Curry's behavior and feel they will be retaliated against if they do not do what Commissioner Curry wants them to do, or that Commissioner Curry will post negative information about them on social media. Mr. Franxman stated Commissioner Curry has a specific "gripe" with Engineering and has been questioning what the engineers are doing and why they are needed on every construction site. Mr. Franxman stated another Director came to him because Commissioner Curry told him who to hire and who not to hire, and that Commissioner Curry was getting involved in financial decisions and was meeting with the Director's staff regarding operations.

Mr. Franxman stated the County's Policies are not specific as to their application to Commissioners. Mr. Franxman stated Commissioners are referred to in the Policies related to benefits, but the Policies do not specifically apply to Commissioners regarding daily operations or general Policies like harassment and retaliation. When asked about Mr. Cornman's complaint against Commissioner Curry regarding retaliation, Mr. Franxman stated the County does not have a mechanism to handle such a complaint through the HR process. Mr. Franxman stated there has been pushback from the Ethics Commission which Mr. Franxman stated informed the County that it does not address such retaliation claims, and that those claims instead are necessarily to be addressed by the County.

o) Paula Mazan – March 27, 2026

HGRS interviewed Ms. Mazan on March 27, 2026. Ms. Mazan is a Planning Customer Service Specialist. Ms. Mazan stated on December 1, 2025, Commissioner Curry came to the Planning office regarding the Curry Variance Application. Ms. Mazan noted that Commissioner Curry did not sign in at the front desk on that day. Ms. Mazan stated that Commissioner Curry told her that he had mistakenly included a document in his variance application file, and that he wanted the document deleted/removed from the file and replaced with a new document. Ms. Mazan stated

the document at issue was apparently an invoice for a survey Commissioner Curry paid for in relation to his variance. Ms. Mazan stated Commissioner Curry told her that the surveyor who prepared the survey, "Cliff" (no last name given), did not want his name included in Commissioner Curry's documents. Ms. Mazan stated she told Commissioner Curry that Planning does not delete or remove files once submitted, but that Commissioner Curry repeated his request. Ms. Mazan stated she informed Commissioner Curry that she did not have authority to delete or remove public documents[51], so she asked another Planning employee with authority, Ahren Biernacki, to delete and remove the document. According to Ms. Mazan, the document was deleted/removed from the file. Ms. Mazan stated she received a new document from Commissioner Curry that he said was a replacement for the old document, and that after receiving help from a Planning IT employee, she added the new document into the file. Ms. Mazan stated the new document did not include the surveyor's name and only showed that the survey was paid for by Commissioner Curry.

Ms. Mazan stated as a rule, Planning staff never delete or remove public documents, and only certain employees in Planning have authority to do so. Ms. Mazan stated she did not question Commissioner Curry because of his authority as a Commissioner. Ms. Mazan stated it is not normal to delete documents and the reason the document was deleted was because it was requested by a Commissioner. Ms. Mazan stated if an ordinary citizen had asked her to delete a document she would have told them no, but that she would be happy to upload additional files and include an explanation on the file as to why a new document was uploaded.

Ms. Mazan stated after the document was deleted, she went to Mr. Schoen and told him what happened because she wanted him to know why there may be a discrepancy in the file. Ms. Mazan stated she also wanted Mr. Schoen to know that Commissioner Curry requested the document be deleted and removed and that she did what she was told to do by Commissioner Curry. Ms. Mazan stated Mr. Schoen asked for the original document to be reinserted into the file because it is a public record and should not have been removed. Ms. Mazan stated when a document is deleted, it is deleted forever, but she did some research and found that pre-application meeting documents are in their own separate file in the system and she was able to get a copy of the original document from Commissioner Curry's pre-application file to re-insert it into the proper file.

p) Commissioner Dan Curry – March 27, 2026

HGRS conducted a follow-up interview with Commissioner Curry on March 27, 2026 to allow Commissioner Curry to address issues discussed herein raised during the Investigation including, but not limited to, those issues raised in the Ethics Complaints. Commissioner Curry stated he received a copy of Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint, which he understood was submitted

[51] The documents and file at issue are digital.

by the Code Department, which included six (6) actions Mr. Gainey believed to be retaliatory[52]. Commissioner Curry stated he posted Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint on Facebook because he thought it was "ridiculously dumb." Commissioner Curry stated he did not know Mr. Gainey was an ex-police officer and that it was improper to disclose Mr. Gainey's personal information including his address, so he took the post down, "blacked out" Mr. Gainey's information, then reposted it.

The first allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint is that, "*Commissioner Curry began requesting information on the officers who worked his neighbor's case, in particular, body-worn camera footage. One of whom no longer works for the County and was disciplined according to the BCC policy for body-worn camera policy violations.*" Commissioner Curry stated he received a complimentary copy of public records requested by the Copelands. Commissioner Curry stated he reviewed the body camera footage included in the public records response to the Copelands and thus he questioned whether Mr. Galloway had purposefully shut down his body camera during Mr. Galloway's interaction with the Copelands. Commissioner Curry stated after he watched that body camera footage it is possible he requested additional body camera footage to review. Commissioner Curry stated he probably sent the body camera footage back to Mr. Cornman and asked for applicable policies.

Commissioner Curry stated Code told him they "took care of" the issue or disciplined the Code Officer, but Commissioner Curry stated he never received confirmation of what was actually done regarding Mr. Galloway related to the body camera issue. Commissioner Curry stated he never inquired as to what discipline Mr. Galloway received, and that he still is not aware if Mr. Galloway was terminated for turning his body camera off or if he was terminated for a different reason. Commissioner Curry stated he has not reviewed any HR documents regarding Mr. Galloway, and he did not have an expectation for Code to report to him on what disciplinary action they took against Mr. Galloway, as long as Code "was going to do what they needed to do" with the employee in their Department. Commissioner Curry then stated the incident with Mr. Galloway is *not* one of the reasons he feels targeted by Code, but it created tensions between Commissioner Curry and Code when Commissioner Curry started asking questions about the body camera footage. When asked specifically what his complaint was/is related to Mr. Galloway, Commissioner Curry stated it was not a complaint per se, and that he would not know anything about that interaction but for the records request. Commissioner Curry stated his concerns were more of a question about common practice related to shutting off body camera footage. Commissioner Curry also stated he thought another female Code Officer referred to him as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case in a different video but could not identify same.

Commissioner Curry stated there are forty (40) driveways out of compliance in his neighborhood, but that he was not aware of any active Code complaints on those driveways. Commissioner Curry claimed Planning signed off on these alleged non-compliant driveways

[52] During this interview it was not apparent whether Commissioner Curry was aware of the Ethics Complaint filed by Mr. Cornman.

during the BPR process. Commissioner Curry explained that as a part of the BPR process, the County must inspect the entire property, and that the County signed off on driveways not in compliance with the LDC. Commissioner Curry stated Code "stood on" the allegedly Copelands' non-compliant driveway while they filed Mr. Copeland's complaint against Commissioner Curry's driveway. Commissioner Curry noted he has not filed a Code complaint against the Copelands' driveway.

The second allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint is that, "*Commissioner Curry alleged that Code Compliance officers suggested to the Copelands that he was the complainant in their case. HR investigated the allegation and determined that no further investigation was necessary."* Commissioner Curry stated that in body camera footage it appeared to him that he was pointed out as the complainant, and that during a verbal dispute with Mr. Copeland, Mr. Copeland said several times he knew Commissioner Curry was the person that complained. Commissioner Curry stated it was not possible that the Copelands knew he was the complainant on their own. Commissioner Curry stated his name is not on the Copeland Code Case and that neighbors came to him because they were scared to call Code about the Copelands. When asked about any issues with the Copelands prior to the dispute, Commissioner Curry stated Ms. Curry sent Ms. Copeland a letter about parking in the road and that Ms. Copeland "was nice about it."

The third allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint is that, *"[d]uring meetings with Commissioner Curry, he made statements about his frustrations regarding his code case, including the processes he was having to go through and the money it was costing him*." Commissioner Curry stated he "absolutely" said this, that any time he walked into Planning he had to pay a fee for something, and going through the variance process "opened his eyes on a lot of things." Commissioner Curry stated if private citizens must go through a certain process, then the County needs to go through the same process. Commissioner Curry stated there is a broad scope when it comes to accessory structures, which is not defined, and includes doghouses, flag poles, and planters. Commissioner Curry further stated he had several meetings where the County informed Commissioner Curry he would be required to obtain an As Built Survey, a BPR inspection, and had to pay for a Planning permit for his shed. Commissioner Curry questioned why the County did not have to follow the same process. Commissioner Curry stated he was upset at the flawed process, not with the Code Department.

The fourth allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint is that, "*Commissioner Curry became involved in a Code Compliance personnel case that had been dealt with approximately a year earlier and was investigated by HR and the County Administrator at that time. This matter has been dealt with and moved on from, but Commissioner Curry has requested that it be reinvestigated by an outside agency, which I feel is retaliation*." Commissioner Curry stated he did not initially know what this allegation was about, but that it could be related to the dispute between Jim Holloway and Buddy Burgess and the related recent investigation Mr. Kellenberger asked HGRS to conduct. Commissioner Curry stated he did not remember asking anyone to investigate that dispute.

The fifth allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint is that, "*Commissioner Curry recently went to the Code Compliance Office in South Walton before business hours, took pictures of our sheds and buildings, and then posted them on Facebook, questioning whether our buildings were permitted. He also went to Walton County Beach Operations and did the same thing*." Commissioner Curry stated he was "absolutely guilty of that." Commissioner Curry stated he went to three (3) different County facilities - the Code office at the South Walton Annex building, Helen McCall Park, and the Beach Operations office. Commissioner Curry stated he went to those facilities to see what kind of accessory structures they had and to see if the County went through the same process he and citizens have to go through with regard to such structures. Commissioner Curry stated the Code office at the South Walton Annex had a couple of sheds that did not go through any kind of Planning or BPR process, and that he saw the same thing at Helen McCall Park and the Beach Operations office.

As to the issue regarding access to County facilities outside normal operating hours, Commissioner Curry stated he took multiple pictures and called Mr. Kellenberger to ask why he could not get through the gate at the South Walton Code facility. Commissioner Curry stated he was there at 7:50am and noted the Code office opens at 8:00am. Commissioner Curry stated he understood it was normal for the gate to be locked if it was outside of business hours, but he took issue because as a Commissioner he did not have a mechanism to get into the gate. Commissioner Curry stated he requested the information to get into the gate but has not attempted to get through the gate since.

Commissioner Curry stated he has done research on the issue regarding accessory structures on County-owned properties and made records requests for any As Built Surveys, development orders, or anything on accessory structures on County-owned properties, but he has not received any As Built Surveys from the County. Commissioner Curry stated he received development orders on related sheds and even though they were stamped by an engineer, they were not signed off on by a licensed surveyor so according to Commissioner Curry, the three properties at issue are not in compliance. Commissioner Curry stated he spoke to Planning about this, and the County has "readjusted the thinking of that process" so that as long as his shed is not in a flood plain, he does not need to go through the BPR process or get an As Built Survey. Commissioner Curry stated he has not received any documents in response to his records request, but that Planning is steadily working on his request and acknowledged that it will take "many man hours" to complete the requests[53]. Commissioner Curry also stated Mr. Kellenberger sent him a video of one shed being taken down at the Beach Operations property in South Walton.

The sixth allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint is that, *"[o]ne thing Commissioner Curry had to do to come into compliance with his code case was move his shed that is in his backyard. Commissioner Curry posted pictures of the "Hollands" helping him move his shed. The Hollands have an open Code case now, and after Code went out to the Hollands' property to look*

[53] According to an update from Planning on May 15, 2026, Commissioner Curry has received all requested documents and information.

for violations, Commissioner Curry requested a meeting with Code and County officials, with the Hollands. I believe this maybe an attempt to manipulate how the Hollands' code case is handled." Commissioner Curry stated he had a personal relationship with the Hollands before he became a Commissioner, and that he will continue to be friends with the Hollands even after he ceases being a Commissioner. Commissioner Curry stated the BCC appointed him to be a moderator between the Hollands and the County following the lawsuit that was settled between the parties. Commissioner Curry further stated that recently, the Hollands were having an issue with the County regarding their Code case and wanted a meeting, so Commissioner Curry said he would facilitate the meeting and had his aide email several people in the Code, Legal, Administration and Planning Departments to attend a meeting with the Hollands. Commissioner Curry stated Mr. Gainey was not invited to the meeting with the Hollands but was in attendance. Commissioner Curry stated at the time of this meeting he had not received a copy of Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint, but that Mr. Gainey had already filed it. Commissioner Curry stated that it was not ethical to allow Mr. Gainey to attend the meeting because Commissioner Curry had not received Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint at that point. Commissioner Curry stated that sometimes he will bus tables for the Hollands at their restaurant and that the Hollands helped him move his shed on his property. Commissioner Curry stated the Hollands gave him a "friends and family discount" to move the shed, and that he paid the Hollands $150.00 for their help when other movers in the area would likely charge around $300.00. Commissioner Curry stated he had not but would be disclosing the $150.00 discount as a gift.

Commissioner Curry stated he is not making contact with Code while the Ethics Complaints are being investigated. Commissioner Curry stated Mr. Kellenberger will meet with him for any pre-BCC meetings to tell Commissioner Curry what is on the agenda related to Code.

Commissioner Curry stated he has been involved in Code cases with three (3) residents that live on Bay Loop including the Hackers. Commissioner Curry stated he does not have a personal relationship with the Hackers, and that instead they reached out to him as their Commissioner after going back and forth with the Code. Commissioner Curry claimed the Hackers say Code is not consistent, which is why he wanted to "get everyone in one room to work out the issues." Commissioner Curry stated he has met with the Hackers multiple times, but only once with Code present. Commissioner Curry also stated he recently facilitated a meeting between Planning and a family that lives in North Walton to see if he "could sit everyone down to come to a solution" on an issue with a trailer on the property after their home had burned down.

When asked about the Copelands, Commissioner Curry stated the Copelands have a no-trespass against him, and that he has one against the Copelands and their kids. Commissioner Curry stated getting a no-trespass was something a WCSO officer suggested the Currys should do. Commissioner Curry stated he included the Copelands' kids so they would not come to his property and pretend to get hurt so that the Copelands could sue him.

Regarding Mr. Copeland's comments at the ZBA hearing, Commissioner Curry stated he did not believe Code merely informed the Copelands of the process of how to file a Code complaint

after the Copelands inquired, although he could not state a reason for his belief. Commissioner Curry stated an elderly lady next door to the Copelands had to move out of her house after the Copelands filed a Code complaint against her. Commissioner Curry stated Mr. Copeland was belligerent to this elderly lady because her fence was on his property, and then Copeland pushed her fence over.

Commissioner Curry stated he did not tell Mr. Cornman he wanted to be anonymous on the Copeland Code Case. Commissioner Curry stated he asked for Mr. Cornman look at certain issues on the Copelands' Property and "if all had been okay" he would tell his neighbors (that allegedly prompted him to call Mr. Cornman) "to pound sand and that he would pound sand himself," but Code said the trailer and portable toilet were not in compliance. Commissioner Curry stated he only found out after the fact from Mr. Cornman that anyone who calls or texts regarding a Code issue is technically a complainant. Commissioner Curry stated he merely wanted Mr. Cornman/Code to "take a look" at the Copelands' Property, and that he did not fill out a formal complaint. Commissioner Curry stated he thought all complaints and records requests could not be anonymous, and that he expected the Copelands would learn he made the complaint if it was going to be a public record. Commissioner Curry stated he did not care that the Copelands knew he was the complaint but would rather they did not because he did not want it to be a "world war."

When asked about his expected outcome from making the reports regarding the Copelands to Mr. Cornman, Commissioner Curry stated he knew someone could not place a portable toilet, dump dirt, and a trailer with no tags in the road, and if he had been wrong about that and was told to "pound sand" he would have said "fine," but Code took it upon themselves to put (Notice of Violation) tags on the portable toilet and told the Copelands to move it. When asked what he intended for Code to do in response to his complaints, Commissioner Curry responded he has constituents that come to him and ask about preservation conversation and if he knows about a public safety hazard, he believes he has an obligation to report it.

Commissioner Curry stated Code, "cannot say they are complaint driven and reactive when they proactively go after other individuals with non-compliance." Commissioner Curry acknowledged that Code did *not* proactively pursue issues on his Property, and that Code was reactive after the Copelands filed a complaint, but claimed Code says they are "reactive but then are proactive in other situations." Commissioner Curry stated he had reviewed an unrelated text message[54] between Ms. Hicks and Mr. Cornman where Ms. Hicks said she would open a

[54] Although Commissioner Curry stated he believed this text message was not related to the Copeland Code Case, it is evident the text message *is* in fact related to the Copeland Code Case because Ms. Hicks and Mr. Corman are clearly texting about the Copelands' Property located at 599 Waterview Cove. *See* **Ex. 17,** pgs. 20 -21 (Georgina Hicks: "There is not an open case on 599 Waterview Cove. For the loud pump. Do you want me to open a case? If so who is the complaint?"; Tony Cornman: "I thought I remembered us talking about the pump and it being in the preservation area (maybe Im wrong). If that is the case and we are aware of it not sure we need a complainant since its in preservation."; Georgina Hicks: "I will open a proactive case on the pump in the preservation"). Additionally, the photographs Commissioner Curry sent to Mr. Cornman of the

"proactive" case on a "pump" when no complaint was filed. When asked if this text was actually in response to Commissioner Curry's complaints regarding the Copelands' Property, Commissioner Curry stated he did not say anything to Mr. Cornman about a "pump," but he forwarded a photo of a "pipe" to Mr. Cornman. When again asked if he believes Code was being proactive towards him, Commissioner Curry simply stated he thought Code was being selective in enforcement against the Currys as a result of him pointing out policies that he believes are "broken within Code."

When asked about his social media posts regarding Code and yard sale signs (on Highway 98), Commissioner Curry stated there was a post on social media about Code picking up yard sale signs in the right of way on a Saturday morning, which he thought was selective because often he sees realtor and pressure washing signs in the right of way, but Code was only picking up yard sale signs. Commissioner Curry said he made a character[55] that says "marked myself safe from yard sale signs" and Commissioner Curry even had his own yard sale and took a picture of himself having the yard sale. Commissioner Curry stated he did not see the particular right of way that Code removed the signs from. When asked about the BCC voting on scenic corridor standards and Commissioner Curry's vote in favor of such motion, Commissioner Curry stated he does not disagree that there is a policy on signs in the scenic corridor, but if Code is going to pick up one set of signs they need to pick them all up.

When asked about his own variance process, Commissioner Curry stated he has paid close to $1,500.00 on materials and fees, and that he moved his shed to where it is now in compliance. Commissioner Curry stated his driveway was approved because one of his driveways does not connect to a County maintained roadway.

When asked if he requested for a public record/document to be removed from his Planning application file, Commissioner Curry stated that he hired a person named "Brandon" (no last name given) to do an overlay of where his shed was previously located over his 2015 survey. Commissioner Curry stated Brandon works for two companies, and after Commissioner Curry turned the receipt for Brandon's work into Planning as part of his Variance Application, Cliff Knauer, who owns one of the companies Brandon works for, told Commissioner Curry that the receipt needed to list a different company name. Commissioner Curry stated he got the corrected receipt from Brandon and then talked to Ms. Mazan in Planning to get the new receipt added to his file. Commissioner Curry stated the old receipt was "no good," and he wanted to replace it with the new receipt. Commissioner Curry stated there was confusion with the system or that Ms. Mazan possibly did not have the rights to complete Commissioner Curry's request, so someone else (he could not recall their name) had to help Ms. Mazan. Commissioner Curry acknowledged that if he personally submits something to the County he expects it to be a public record.

"pipe" and/or "pump" at the Copelands' Property are the same photographs Mr. Cornman shared with Ms. Hicks. *See* **Exs. 14, 15**.

[55] This is a cartoon that was posted to Commissioner Curry's Facebook account.

When asked about issues with Mr. Baronti, Commissioner Curry stated he asked Mr. Baronti if he could rent a saw from Home Depot and cut an inch gap between the County maintained road and his driveway so that it would no longer be connected (and thus, not subject to the LDC requirements). Commissioner Curry said Mr. Baronti got irritated with this question and said Commissioner Curry could not do that (cut an inch gap between the County maintained road and his driveway). Commissioner Curry stated he told Mr. Baronti that he was trying to "save him ZBA cases" and that there are "600 cases related to driveways." Commissioner Curry alleged Mr. Baronti said, "bring it on I only have one more year here anyways." Commissioner Curry stated he sent an email to Mr. Kellenberger about Mr. Baronti's comment and complained that it was not acceptable. Commissioner Curry stated it went through the HR process and now Mr. Baronti does not work on ZBA cases, but Commissioner Curry could not recall if someone told him Mr. Baronti does not work ZBA cases anymore or if he had not seen Mr. Baronti at any recent ZBA hearings. Commissioner Curry stated he does not know anything about the HR investigation, only that that HR came by and asked him a few questions and he never heard from HR as to the end result. Commissioner Curry was asked about the allegation that he told Mr. Baronti "heads would roll" or insinuated other negative consequences would follow if he did not receive his variance and in response stated he did not make the specific comments alleged, but that any comment he may have made in such vein would have been made in a joking or sarcastic manner.

Commissioner Curry was asked about Mr. Gainey's allegation that during a pre-BCC meeting Commissioner Curry placed a pistol between the two of them on a table at Commissioner Curry's office. Commissioner Curry stated that as far as he knows he can carry a firearm in County buildings, and that he does take his pistol off his waist and puts it on the desk or table in front of where he is sitting. Commissioner Curry stated when Mr. Cornman and Mr. Gainey came into his office Commissioner Curry may not have realized the gun was on the table, and he did not think the gun being placed on the table should have been an issue coming from Mr. Gainey as an ex-police officer, and that Mr. Gainey himself may be been armed.

Commissioner Curry was asked about his March 10, 2026 agenda item that stated, "Codes Discussion with possible motions. Selective Enforcement discussion, Body Cam policy, Code Enforcement Vehicles (count and policy), Fines past and present Update, FTE shift information as well as anything else the conversation may lead into" and the corresponding Facebook post that stated, "[i]f any of my agenda items below interest you please attend the meeting on Tuesday and share your thoughts and experiences during public comment if no motions are made. See ya Tuesday." Commissioner Curry stated he took Legal's advice to take the post down, but that he was planning to bring up selective enforcement, emails concerning the anonymous complaint issue regarding the Copelands, and violations in the surrounding perimeter around his house. Commissioner Curry stated he was going to bring all of this up at the BCC meeting to suggest going over policies to fix the issues. Commissioner Curry stated he always urges the public to come to BCC meetings, and that there was never any intent on his part to intimidate Code by inviting people that have ever had any issues with Code to the BCC meeting.

Commissioner Curry stated he was in the process of obtaining information related to the costs of County vehicles being utilized by Code employees.

q) Stephen Schoen – March 30, 2026

HGRS conducted a follow up interview with Mr. Schoen on March 30, 2026 regarding Commissioner Curry's requests to Planning for records related to all County-owned buildings and Planning's requirements for BPR and As Built Surveys. Mr. Schoen stated he understood that Commissioner Curry requested records of everything that was ever done on any parcel that the County owns, which is around 400 parcels, and that Planning staff has started a repository of this information. Mr. Schoen stated he was not familiar with the specific requirements of the three (3) locations Commissioner Curry had identified– the Code building at the South Annex; the Beach Operations building in South Walton; and Helen McCall Park.

Mr. Schoen stated the BPR process is specifically intended to review properties for consistency and conformity of LDC prior to a property being reviewed by the Building Department for permits. During the BPR, Planning specifically looks at things such as setbacks, access, legal status and wetlands, and that there are different expectations for different areas of the County. Mr. Schoen stated all properties generally require site plans and surveys, and sometimes title work and wetland delineations are required depending on the location. Mr. Schoen said generally, the final requirement before building on a property is either a foundation survey or an As Built Survey, both of which are found in every BPR packet.

Mr. Schoen stated, unrelated to Commissioner Curry, that he and Mr. Kellenberger had been talking about the BPR process generally, and that they were unaware that Planning was requiring the BPR process for things that do not need a permit. Mr. Schoen said, for example, for properties located north of the Choctawhatchee Bay, if a structure is under 400 square feet, it does not need to undergo BPR. Mr. Schoen stated Mr. Kellenberger instructed him to move forward with an amendment to the LDC to reflect this.

Mr. Schoen stated Mr. Kellenberger spoke to Commissioner Curry after Commissioner Curry's variance was granted and after their decision to amend the LDC on the BPR requirements. Mr. Schoen stated Mr. Kellenberger told Commissioner Curry that a change to the LDC was coming, and waived Commissioner Curry's responsibility for submitting an As Built Survey. Mr. Schoen clarified Commissioner Curry would not be required to get a building permit, would not need to go through the BPR process, and would not need an As Built Survey. Mr. Schoen stated this was determined after Commissioner Curry raised issues with having to meet these requirements.

When asked for clarification about Commissioner Curry's request to remove a document from the Curry Variance Application, Mr. Schoen stated he told the Planning staff the issue needed to be rectified, the public document needed to be put back in the file, and removing the document was not appropriate because of rules and laws regarding public records.

r) Lisa Jefferies – April 1, 2026

HGRS interviewed Ms. Jefferies on April 1, 2026. Ms. Jefferies is the Street Code Compliance Manager and began managing the Street Code employees in September 2025. Ms. Jefferies spoke about how Commissioner Curry has impacted Code as a whole.

Ms. Jefferies stated Code has a meeting every morning at 7:00 a.m., and that at least three (3) times a week since Commissioner Curry began publicly criticizing Code on social media, a Code employee has brought up one of Commissioner Curry's Facebook posts at the morning meeting. Ms. Jefferies stated Code employees have expressed they are frustrated by the public criticism because they are trying their best to do their jobs and they do not have an opportunity to defend themselves from the negative claims Commissioner Curry has been making online. Ms. Jefferies stated Commissioner Curry has been intimidating Code employees and that the overall morale of the department has been impacted.

Ms. Jefferies stated Commissioner Curry's public criticism has directly impacted Code employees' ability to do their jobs. Ms. Jefferies stated Ms. Hicks was impacted and upset when Commissioner Curry specifically named her in one of his Facebook posts. Ms. Jefferies also stated Mr. Gainey has been noticeably impacted by Commissioner Curry's public criticism, especially after Commissioner Curry posted Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint and personal information on Facebook. Ms. Jefferies stated that other Code employees have been impacted by Commissioner Curry's recent public criticism such as Commissioner Curry making a post related to Code Department vehicles and posts regarding Code picking up yard sale signs.

Ms. Jefferies stated several Code Officers have reported to her that during recent Code inspections, homeowners have started to take their phones out and film the Code Officers, indicating they are going to send the footage to Commissioner Curry. Ms. Jefferies stated this occurred with four (4) different homeowners[56] following Commissioner Curry's public criticism of Code. Ms. Jefferies also stated one Code Officer, Greg Forehand, told her he did not want to work a particular Code case because he was worried about being called out by Commissioner Curry on social media.

Ms. Jefferies stated she has not seen any selective enforcement against Commissioner Curry or any other individuals.

[56] Kate Holland (Jennifer King); John Harrison (Rachel Neenan & Gina Waddell); Greg Lockley & Chip (Sara Medrano); Bobby Rogers (advised that he has scheduled a meeting with Commissioner Curry) (Sara Medrano, Harold Serrano & Gina Waddell).

s) Bobby Rogers – April 22, 2026

On April 22, 2026, Commissioner Curry requested for HGRS to speak to County citizen Bobby Rogers regarding an alleged issue between Mr. Rogers and Code. After a phone interview with Mr. Rogers, it was determined Mr. Rogers' concerns with Code and his allegations of selective enforcement against him were not materially relevant to or within the scope of this Investigation.[57]

t) Stephen Schoen – May 15, 2026

HGRS briefly spoke with Mr. Schoen on the phone on May 15, 2026, to obtain a status update regarding the Planning records requested by Commissioner Curry. On February 4, 2026, Commissioner Curry submitted a public records request for a copy of all As Built Surveys that pertain to County owned properties from the time the LDC was implemented to present, including all "pre plan applications" and "BPR sign odds for any structures on county owned property." *See* **Ex. 19**, pg. 20. When asked for an update on this public records request, Mr. Schoen stated he understood that Planning had given Commissioner Curry all the information he had asked for.

3) Applicable Policies and Florida Statutes Reviewed[58]

[57] HGRS has not been tasked with investigating general allegations of Code selective enforcement by citizens unrelated to the parties central to this Investigation. It is unclear what involvement, if any, Commissioner Curry has with regard to any day-to-day operational issues associated with disputes between Mr. Rogers and Code.

[58] In the interest of brevity, the Applicable Policies Reviewed are included herein below in Appendix A.

C. Analysis and Opinion[59]

1) Commissioner Curry should have been listed as the complainant regarding the Copeland Code Complaint because in texting and speaking with Mr. Cornman about the issues associated with the Copelands' Property, Commissioner Curry *did* report a potential violation (a complaint) that was not anonymous, there is no known law or procedure for retroactive anonymity associated with a non-anonymous complaint, and while the complaints were arguably generally related to public health, safety, and/or welfare issues, the complaints were arguably not sufficiently imminent in nature to justify anonymity.

Considering the facts, evidence, and statements obtained through the course of this Investigation, and in analyzing Florida Statute § 162.06(1)(b) (**Ex. 7**) and related statutes, it is the undersigned's opinion that Commissioner Curry should have been identified as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case, the failure to do so by Code was in error. Moreover, any contention by Commissioner Curry that his identity regarding complaints he made concerning the Copelands' Property should have remained anonymous is unfounded.

Florida Statute § 162.06(1)(b) provides:

> A code inspector **may not** initiate enforcement proceedings for a potential violation of a duly enacted code or ordinance by way of an anonymous complaint. A person who reports a potential violation of a code or an ordinance must provide his or her name and address to the respective local government before an enforcement proceeding may occur. This paragraph does not apply if the code inspector has reason to believe that the violation presents an **imminent threat** to public health, safety, or welfare or imminent destruction of habitat or sensitive resources.

(emphasis added).[60]

The undersigned believes the essence and primary intent of Florida Statute § 162.06(1)(b) (and related statutes) is not to provide the benefit of anonymity to complainants in certain situations (although it can when complainants themselves choose to remain anonymous in certain circumstances of an imminent threat), but instead is intended to dictate and enumerate only limited circumstances when and if code inspectors are *allowed* to *initiate* enforcement actions should the complainant fail to or refuse to provide his or her name and address.

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[59] The Analysis and Opinion section of this Investigative Report should not be construed as a determination on any violation(s) of Florida Statutes. The undersigned is not a trier of fact on potential violation(s) of Florida Statutes; however, a review and analysis of relevant Florida Statutes is required to conduct a thorough Investigation of the issues presented.

[60] *See also*, §§ 162.21(3)(b) and 166.0415(1)(b) setting forth same provision.

Here, this was not the case as Commissioner Curry readily identified himself when he made the complaints regarding the Copelands' Property to Mr. Cornman, never requested anonymity regarding such complaints by his own admission, and utilized his ability to directly contact and discuss these issues Mr. Cornman, Director of Code, by virtue of his position as a Commissioner (and the simple fact he had Mr. Cornman's cell phone number, etc.). Simply stated, the complaint regarding to Copelands' Property was **not** anonymous, there is statutory provision known to the undersigned that allows the retroactive grant of anonymity by Code when the complaint is not anonymous, the undersigned believes that Commissioner Curry should have been identified in appropriate documentation as the complainant regarding the issues associated with the Copelands' Property because **he was**, and nothing in these circumstances or the law known to the undersigned warrant Commissioner Curry being treated as anonymous in this regard. Moreover, by virtue of the text messages sent to Mr. Cornman by Commissioner Curry relating to the Copelands' Property, Commissioner Curry surely knew or should have known that such are matters of public record.

Moreover, while the alleged conditions reported by Commissioner Curry to Mr. Cornman concerning the Copelands' Property were very arguably generally related to public health, safety, welfare, habitats and/or sensitive resources, a plain reading of the language contained in Florida Statute § 162.06(b) states a Code enforcement proceeding may be initiated anonymously ***only*** when the alleged violation of public health, safety or welfare or destruction of habitat or sensitive recourses is ***imminent***. According to multiple definitions, something is "imminent" only if it is ready to take place or happening soon.[61] Mirriam Webster further defines "imminent" as "often used of something bad or dangerous seen as menacingly near."[62] By definition, something is *not* imminent if it has already occurred.

Commissioner Curry's first complaint to Mr. Cornman was in regard to a well and/or pump that had *already* been allegedly installed in a preservation area/wetland protection zone. While the destruction of a preservation area/wetland protection zone may certainly fit within the framework of Florida Statute § 162.06(1)(b) should the complaint be anonymous, the weight of evidence suggests any alleged threat of such a device was *not* imminent because any damage to the alleged preservation zone had already occurred.

As it relates to Commissioner Curry's secondary complaints regarding the trailer, portable toilet, and other obstructing objects in the road, while it may be a slightly closer call regarding whether those conditions could be characterized as imminent threats, given all of the relevant circumstances and statutes discussed above, including the fact that Commissioner Curry clearly identified himself and admittedly did not request anonymity when he made the Complaints to Mr. Cornman, the undersigned believes that Commissioner Curry's complaints regarding the

[61] https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/imminent;
https://www.dictionary.com/browse/imminent;
https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/imminent; https://www.thesaurus.com/browse/imminent

[62] https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/imminent

Copelands' Property should clearly not have been treated as anonymous by Code. Certainly, these items needed to be removed from the road (which is undisputable they ultimately were) and they were in fact LDC violations as established in the Copeland Code Case (**Ex. 5**).

To avoid future anonymity issues and ensure compliance with Florida Statutes, in the actual event of an actual anonymous complaint regarding a potential Code violation (which did not occur here) Code Officers—who appear to have discretion in determining whether an alleged LDC violation presents an imminent threat—should apply greater scrutiny to such determinations and more clearly document the basis for treating a complaint as imminent. Moreover, Code should be instructed not to engage in the retroactive application of anonymity to a Code complaint that was not anonymous regardless of who makes such compliant including an elected official. The decision to remain anonymous when reporting a potential Code violation rest with the complainant, not with Code. Code's sole responsibility in dealing with an *actual* anonymous complaint (unlike the circumstances here) is to then determine whether it can initiate enforcement proceedings by determining if the threat is sufficiently imminent to the categories of threats set forth in relevant statutes.

Commissioner Curry has suggested Mr. Cornman's interpretation of Florida Statute § 162.06(b) has been inconsistent among different Code cases. On December 29, 2025, Commissioner Curry pointed to an email from Mr. Cornman dated February 13, 2025 regarding an unrelated Code case. *See* **Ex. 1, pgs. 14-15**. In this email, Mr. Cornman stated that Florida Statutes § 162.06(b), "does provide some limited exceptions to the name and contact information requirement. I will make sure staff is aware of those exceptions…" *See* **Ex. 1, pg. 14**. This statement from Mr. Cornman is correct as there are some exceptions to the requirements of Florida Statute § 162.06(b), and to the extent Commissioner Curry takes issue with Mr. Cornman's statement, such is irrelevant to any determinations made in this Investigation because the applicability Florida Statute § 162.06(b) can only be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Further, in Commissioner Curry's statements, in many email communications, in relevant video footage, and in the 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint, Commissioner Curry maintains he actually never filed a formal complaint against the Copelands, and that this is one of the reasons his identity should not have been disclosed as a complainant. *See* **Ex. 1**, generally**; Vid. Ex. L**. Commissioner Curry has consistently stated he only relayed information that he received from his neighbors, who were apparently afraid of retaliation from Mr. Copeland. *See* **Ex. 1, pg. 18**. Commissioner Curry has not provided any evidence of the alleged communications with his neighbors. Moreover, regardless of Commissioner Curry's contention, it is evident that Commissioner Curry *did* make a formal complaint against the Copelands. This determination is consistent with evidence and statements that establish any text message, email or call made to Code is taken as an official complaint. In both of his interviews, Commissioner Curry acknowledged he made his complaints to Mr. Cornman via text message and acknowledged his text messages were public records. *See* **Ex. 14**. Mr. Cornman informed Commissioner Curry in an email dated September 19, 2025 that if someone calls, texts or emails Code with a violation, they are a complainant. *See* **Ex. 1, pg. 48**. Commissioner Curry claims he was trying to be "unofficial" when he contacted Mr. Cornman but

acknowledged Mr. Cornman informed him that any text or phone call is considered a formal complaint. It appears Commissioner Curry has placed undue emphasis on whether his complaint was "official" because regardless of his belief or motives for making the complaint, an official Code case *was* initiated from Commission Curry's text messages to Mr. Cornman. *See* **Ex. 14**.

2) Although Mr. Galloway may have referenced Commissioner Curry during his conversation with the Copelands on June 16, 2025, evidence suggests that due to the nature of the dispute between the Currys and the Copelands, the Copelands had independent reasons to believe the Currys were making the complaints. Additionally, there is no evidence or legal authority to suggest Commissioner Curry was improperly identified by any Code Officer as the complainant in the Copeland Code Case. Moreover, whether Commissioner Curry was identified as the complainant is immaterial because Commissioner Curry's communications to Code regarding the Copelands are public records pursuant to Florida Statute § 119. Thus, Commissioner Curry was not adversely impacted by any Code Officers' actions.

Notwithstanding the fact as discussed above that Commissioner Curry's complaints against the Copelands' Property were not anonymous and should not have been treated as such by Code, and notwithstanding that evidence suggests Mr. Galloway may have referenced Commissioner Curry when he turned his body camera off at the Copelands' Property on June 16, 2025, the undersigned has determined it is more likely that the Copelands already had independent knowledge that the Currys were making complaints against them and thus any suggestion by Commissioner Curry that he should not have been disclosed as the Complaint relating the Copelands' Property is unfounded.

First, Mr. Copeland maintained that he was the one who referenced Commissioner Curry to Mr. Galloway on June 16, 2025, not the other way around. Mr. Copeland said he made a comment to Mr. Galloway asking why the Currys would not leave him alone and that Mr. Galloway may have made a comment about the Currys in response, but that Mr. Galloway never actually articulated who the complainant was. Second, although Commissioner Curry's statements suggested that he and his wife had no issues with the Copelands prior to the Copeland Code Case, Mr. Copeland stated prior to the Copeland Code Case, Ms. Curry sent him and/or his wife a text message claiming the Copelands had not been neighborly, and that Ms. Curry complained to them about the construction at their house, their trailer, and their portable toilet. Mr. Copeland also stated there had been tension between the neighbors regarding Ms. Curry's day care and traffic related to pick up and drop off of children attending the day care. After Code visited the Copelands' Property regarding the same conditions the Currys had already complained about (including but not limited to the trailer and portable toilet), Mr. Copeland submitted a public records request and learned the complaint was anonymous but also reviewed pages of Mr. Cornman and Commissioner Curry texting and emailing back and forth about the Copelands' Property. *See* **Ex. 14**. Mr. Copeland stated that by June 16, 2025 when Mr. Galloway visited his property, he already assumed the Currys complained Code.

Considering these statements and in analyzing the seemingly contentious relationship between the Currys and the Copelands, the undersigned has determined it was reasonable and probable that the Copelands already knew, or at a minimum suspected, that the Currys filed the complaints against their property. All evidence suggests that Mr. Galloway possibly referencing Commissioner Curry is not the sole or even primary reason the Copelands learned the Currys complained against them. Commissioner Curry's claim that he was "attacked" by the Copelands as a result of the lack of anonymity on the Copeland Code Case is unfounded.

Moreover, after reviewing body camera footage from Code Officers at Copelands' Property (*see* **Vid. Exs. A-D**) and in light of all witness statements, there is no evidence to suggest that any Code Officer, other than possibly Mr. Galloway, disclosed Commissioner Curry as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case. In fact, all witness statements are consistent that the Copelands, not Code Officers, mentioned the Currys by name, and initiated comments that indicated they already knew the Currys made the complaints. For example, when Ms. Hicks visited the Copelands' Property on June 26, 2025, it was Mr. Copeland, *not* Ms. Hicks, who stated he knew the complaint [about the trailer] came from Commissioner Curry. *See* **Vid. Ex. B**. In this body camera footage, Ms. Hicks did not reference the Currys, and she did not make a verbal response to Mr. Copeland's statement that it was Commissioner Curry who complained. *See* **Vid. Ex. B**. During this interaction Mr. Copeland also stated the Currys were setting up cameras and that he heard Ms. Curry yelling from his home, and Ms. Hicks made no comments about the Currys in response. *See* **Vid. Ex. B**. All evidence indicates Ms. Hicks professionally communicated with the Copelands regarding their LDC violations and did not disclose Commissioner Curry's identity as the complainant. Notably, in body camera footage from Mr. Bennett dated June 14, 2025, and June 15, 2025, *he did not speak with anyone at the Copelands' Property* and accordingly did not disclose Commissioner Curry's identity as the complainant. *See* **Vid. Exs. C - D**. As detailed further below in **Sections III(C)(3)(4) & (5),** there is no evidence to suggest any Code Officer, other than Mr. Galloway as it specifically relates to his body camera, violated any Florida Statute, Policy or Code Policy when visiting the Copelands' Property. *See* **Exs. 6-8**, generally. Accordingly, there is no evidence to suggest Commissioner Curry was negatively or adversely impacted by any actions of the Code Officers.

Moreover, some of Commissioner Curry's statements related to this issue are inconsistent in that he stated in his March 27, 2026 interview he expected the Copelands would learn he complained because of public records, and even stated he did not care if the Copelands knew, but also did not want them to know because he did not want it to be a "world war." On the other hand, Commissioner Curry has consistently complained about being named as the complainant and such allegation forms the basis of his 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint. *See* **Ex. 1**, generally.

Notwithstanding the determinations above, regardless of whether Commissioner Curry's complaints regarding the Copelands' Property were anonymous, properly treated as such, imminent in nature, and despite Commissioner Curry's conflicting statements, whether Commissioner Curry was identified as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case is inconsequential when considering the law and public record requirements pursuant to Florida

Statute. *See* **Ex. 7**, § 119, *Fla. Stat*. Commissioner Curry had no reasonable expectation of anonymity because he made complaints via text message, which are, in fact, public records pursuant to Florida Statute § 119. *See* **Ex. 7**, § 119, *Fla. Stat.*; **Ex. 14**. Commissioner Curry texted complaints to Mr. Cornman, which were then shared amongst Code Officers to address Commissioner Curry's Complaints. *See* **Exs. 14; 15; 16; 17**. In addition, Commissioner Curry sent several photos of the Copelands' Property to Mr. Cornman via text message, which are also a part of public record. *See* **Ex. 14**. In fact, Mr. Copeland requested and reviewed these exact records.

Furthermore, on August 30, 2025, before Commissioner Curry made the 12/202/2025 Curry Complaint, Commissioner Curry admitted to Mr. Copeland that he *did* communicate with Code regarding the Copelands' Property. *See* **Vid. Ex. L**. In the video taken by and posted on Facebook by Commissioner Curry, he states he asked Code to tell the Copelands to move their stuff, including the trailer and portable toilet *See* **Vid. Ex. L.** Therefore, the alleged improper disclosure of Commissioner Curry's identity is inconsequential considering Commissioner Curry's own admissions and in analyzing public record requirements outlined in Florida Statutes, and Commissioner Curry has unfoundedly alleged any improper disclosure of his identity.

3) Commissioner Curry was justified in bringing Mr. Galloway's body camera footage to Code's attention. In response, Code and HR sufficiently and appropriately addressed Commissioner Curry's concerns and issued the appropriate level of discipline to Mr. Galloway in accordance with Policies. At all times thereafter, it was unreasonable for Commissioner Curry to continue to raise the issue after the matter was appropriately handled by Code and HR, and especially after Mr. Galloway ceased to be employed by the County.

Following his review of Mr. Galloway's June 16, 2025 body camera footage, Commissioner Curry was justified in taking his concerns to Code. Commissioner Curry first raised his concerns about Mr. Galloway's body camera footage (**Vid. Ex. A**) on September 3, 2025 via email and text message. *See* **Ex. 1 pg. 18; Ex. 14.** Also on September 3, 2025, Mr. Cornman indicated to Commissioner Curry via text message that Mr. Galloway would be disciplined. ***See*** **Ex. 14.** One day later on September 4, 2025, Mr. Cornman informed Commissioner Curry that Mr Galloway "did not follow established policy and directives and it is being addressed internally." *See* **Ex. 1 pg. 17.** In response to Commissioner Curry's complaint, Code and HR investigated and ultimately disciplined Mr. Galloway. *See* **Exs. 10; 12.** On September 19, 2025, Commissioner Curry was informed via email that Mr. Galloway, "did violate policy and was disciplined for turning off the camera." *See* **Ex. 1 pg. 48.**

All evidence suggests Code and HR sufficiently and appropriately addressed Commissioner Curry's complaints regarding Mr. Galloway's body camera footage and issued the appropriate level of discipline in accordance with Policies. *See* **Ex. 6,** *Section I*, *Policies 2.1, 10.2 and 10.3*. Once Commissioner Curry made his complaint, an investigation was initiated by HR and Code (**Ex. 12**), and Mr. Galloway was issued an Initial Written Reprimand pursuant to Policy 10.2 for violation of Code Policy. *See* **Ex. 6,** *Policy 10.2*; **Ex. 8,** *Code Policy 03-02***; Exs. 10, 12**. In response to his Initial Written Reprimand, Mr. Galloway issued a Written Comment claiming

that his body camera experienced an equipment failure for a dead battery, which is why his interaction with the Copelands was disrupted. After receiving Mr. Galloway's Written Comment, a Code Operations Support Specialist generated the MAV Report from Mr. Galloway's body camera which affirmatively determined the camera was turned off manually and did not lose battery. *See* **Ex. 11**. On or around September 16, 2025, HR informed Mr. Galloway that the MAV Report conflicted with his Written Comment, but Mr. Galloway declined to provide additional information *See* **Ex. 12**. On or around September 22, 2025, Mr. Galloway was issued a Notice of Pre-Disciplinary Hearing, informing him that he had violated Policies 2.1. and 10.2, which may result in suspension or disciplinary action, including dismissal. *See* **Ex. 6,** *Policies 2.1 and 10.2***; Ex. 12**. Before the Pre-Disciplinary Hearing occurred, on or around September 24, 2025, Mr. Galloway resigned from his employment with the County. *See* **Ex. 12**. After Mr. Galloway resigned from his employment, there were no actions left for the County to take against Mr. Galloway. Evidence shows Commissioner Curry was notified more than once, and at least once in writing, that Mr. Galloway was disciplined. *See* **Exs. 1, 4**.

In light of the above determinations, Commissioner Curry's continued complaints regarding Mr. Galloway are unfounded. First, Mr. Galloway resigned from his employment with the County on or around September 24, 2025, at which point Commissioner Curry's complaints became moot. *See* **Ex. 12.** Second, the County *did* do something in response to Commissioner Curry's complaint when they investigated the situation and ultimately issued discipline against Mr. Galloway for violations of Policies. *See* **Ex. 10.** As stated herein above, the investigation and discipline issued were sufficient and appropriate. Third, in his interview, Commissioner Curry stated he has not reviewed any HR documents related to Mr. Galloway. Mr. Galloway's personnel file, which is accessible as a public record, details the discipline issued to Mr. Galloway and would answer any outstanding questions Commissioner Curry may have regarding the matter. *See* **Exs. 10-12**. Fourth, in his interview, Commissioner Curry stated he did not have an expectation for Code to report to what disciplinary action was taken against Mr. Galloway. This statement contradicts Commissioner Curry's continued complaints that he was never informed of the discipline taken against Mr. Galloway, which contradicts his other statement he never asked Code what discipline they took against Mr. Galloway. Regardless of the conflicting statements, Commissioner Curry was informed in writing on September 19, 2025 that Mr. Galloway, "was disciplined for turning off his camera." *See* **Ex. 1 pg. 48.** It is unclear why Commissioner Curry has continued to make complaints regarding Mr. Galloway considering the above facts and statements, and any such continued complaints and the resulting consequences of same cannot be justified.

Moreover, as to complaints by Mr. Copeland on this issue, Mr. Copeland alleged he believed Mr. Galloway was instructed to change his notes on the Copeland Code Case. This allegation is refuted by statements from Mr. Cornman who stated Ms. Jefferies implemented new Code procedures related to written reports due to Code Officers putting their opinions in reports rather than facts. On September 8, 2025, Mr. Galloway added additional case notes to the Copeland Code Case regarding his visit to the Property on June 16, 2025. *See* **Ex. 5**. Considering the timing of this entry, it is likely that these were the additional and/or changed comments made by Mr. Galloway. There is no evidence to suggest Mr. Galloway was impermissibly instructed to make an unauthorized change to the Copeland Code Case. Accordingly, Mr. Copeland's allegation cannot be substantiated.

4) Commissioner Curry's allegations that Ms. Hicks and/or Mr. Bennett improperly disclosed him as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case are unfounded, and it was not reasonable for Commissioner Curry to continue raising the issue after the matter was appropriately investigated by Code and HR and because Ms. Hicks' body camera footage does not indicate Ms. Hicks ever identified Commissioner Curry.

Again, notwithstanding the legal fact that Commissioner Curry's complaints against the Copelands' Property were not anonymous and Commissioner Curry had no legitimate expectation that they should have been so, Commissioner Curry's concerns regarding Ms. Hicks' and Mr. Bennett's body camera footage are unfounded considering all facts and evidence and after a review of relevant body camera footage. *See* **Vid. Exs. B-D**.

Commissioner Curry initially raised his concerns about Ms. Hicks' body camera footage in an email dated September 19, 2026 with the subject line reading "Georgina." *See* **Ex. 1,** pg. 19. Other than the subject line, Commissioner Curry's email was somewhat vague stating:

> *So on another one of the videos lets be clear this makes 2 code officers that agreed that I'm the one formally complaining on them* (599 Waterview Cove)? There are no formal complaints made by me on these folks. I asked you since my neighbors are complaining to me about them if you (Codes) could go by and evaluate the issues they are concerned with as well as the photos they sent to me and what I saw. Didn't want anyone in trouble or to start a neighborhood war. *The first or second words out of the code officers mouths are either pointing at me or stating it was me on the complaint form*.

See **Ex. 1,** pg. 19 (emphasis added). This complaint seemingly refers to Ms. Hicks' body camera footage from June 26, 2025. *See* **Vid. Ex. B**. Commissioner Curry raised these concerns again on December 29, 2025 (**Ex. 1**, pgs. 44-46) and again on April 3, 2026 (**Ex. 20**, pgs. 12-18)[63].

Considering the nature of the dispute between the Copelands and the Currys when Commissioner Curry first complained about body camera footage in September 2025[64], it was not necessarily unreasonable for Commissioner Curry to question Code Officers' interactions with the Copelands. However, after reviewing Ms. Hicks' body camera footage, it is evident that Ms. Hicks did *not* mention Commissioner Curry or Ms. Curry by name or by reference. Instead, once Ms. Hicks informed the Copelands she was there for "a complaint," Mr. Copeland immediately responded by stating, "I know, from Dan…" further evidencing the likelihood that the Copelands had independent knowledge that Commissioner Curry was the complainant. *See* **Vid. Ex. B**. Ms.

[63] Commissioner Curry's complaints regarding the Copelands' driveway which are included in these correspondences are addressed herein below in **Sections III(D)(8) & (9)**.

[64] Notably, Ms. Hicks' visit to the Copelands Property (June 26, 2025) and Commissioner Curry's email complaint to Code regarding Ms. Hicks (September 19, 2025) occurred *before* Mr. Copeland made comments referring to Code at the December 15, 2025 ZBA Hearing.

Hicks did not verbally[65] respond to Mr. Copeland's statement identifying Commissioner Curry but continued to discuss the issues with the Copelands' trailer. *See* **Vid. Ex. B**. Although the Copelands continued to reference the Currys during this interaction and even mentioned the Rebar on the Currys' Property (that the Copelands' later formally reported to Code), all evidence suggests Ms. Hicks appropriately and professionally handled her interaction with the Copelands. *See* **Vid. Ex. B**. Accordingly, there is no evidence to suggest Ms. Hicks violated any Code Policy, Policy or Florida Statute. Significantly, Code did not investigate the Rebar[66] at the Currys' Property until the Copelands filed a formal Code complaint against the Currys, which negates Commissioner Curry's contention he was targeted by Code.

Evidence clearly suggests that Code and HR appropriately investigated Commissioner Curry's concerns regarding whether any other Code Officer improperly disclosed Commissioner Curry's identity. Ms. Adkinson stated she asked Ms. Copeland if any of the Code Officers spoke negatively about Commissioner Curry, to which Ms. Copeland responded no. In Ms. Adkinson's October 6, 2025 email to Code, she stated, "I asked [Ms. Copeland] if there was any "bad mouthing" going on. [Ms. Copeland] said not by [Ms. Hicks], but [Ms. Copeland] may have said some things. After looking into the complaint there is no disciplinary action needed on my end." *See* **Ex. 13**. This statement is supported by Ms. Hicks's body camera footage and is supported by the statements made in Ms. Hicks' interview. *See* **Vid. Ex. B**. Mr. Cornman stated he asked every Code Officer if they told the Copelands that Commissioner Curry was the complainant and they all said no. Mr. Cornman stated all of the Code Officers had their body cameras on at the Copelands' Property, except for the one instance with Mr. Galloway. Evidence suggests after HR and Code conducted their investigation, and other than Mr. Galloway, it was determined no Policies were violated and there was nothing else HR needed to pursue.

To the extent Commissioner Curry has taken issue with and/or made complaints regarding Mr. Bennett's body camera footage, any such complaints are unsubstantiated. Mr. Bennett visited the Copelands' Property on Saturday June 14, 2025 and Sunday June 15, 2025 while working the weekend Code shift. *See* **Ex. 5; Vid. Exs. C-D**. During these visits, Mr. Bennett did not speak with the Copelands and did not speak with anyone else at the Copelands' Property. *See* **Vid. Exs. C-D.** Accordingly, any concerns regarding Mr. Bennett and his potential interactions with the Copelands are unfounded.

Commissioner Curry's email statement that "*The first or second words out of the code officers mouths are either pointing at me or stating it was me on the complaint form*" is unsubstantiated after a review of all applicable body camera footage. *See* **Ex. 1,** pg. 19; **Vid. Exs. A-D**. Although it is possible Mr. Galloway spoke with the Copelands regarding Commissioner

[65] Ms. Hicks' facial expressions are not captured by the body camera video footage, so the undersigned is unable to determine if Ms. Hicks made any facial expression in response to Mr. Copeland's comment. However, whether Ms. Hicks made a facial expression is somewhat insignificant considering the Copelands already knew Commissioner Curry was the complainant.

[66] Ms. Hicks reported to Mr. Cornman that Mr. Copeland told her about Rebar on Commissioner Currys' property and that in response, she physically pointed to the Rebar and asked if that was the rebar Mr. Copeland was referring to.

Curry as detailed herein above, this characterization of Code Officers' interactions with the Copelands is exaggerated at best.

To summarize, while it was reasonable for Commissioner Curry to look into Code Officer body camera footage, and it is understandable that Commissioner Curry had heighted concerns considering the nature of his dispute with the Copelands, Commissioner Curry's allegations are unsupported and he had no reasonable basis to continuing to raise these concerns after Code and HR's investigation, and especially after a review of the applicable body camera footage.

5) With the exception of Mr. Galloway's Code Policy violation regarding his body camera, and the improper characterization of Commissioner Curry's complaints against the Copelands as anonymous, Code otherwise appropriately handled the Copeland Code Case and there is no evidence to suggest Code violated any other Policy, Code Policy or Florida Statute in handling the Copeland Code Case.

All evidence suggests that, except for Mr. Galloway's violation of Policies and Code Policies related to his body camera footage detailed in **Sections III(C)(2) & (3)**, Code appropriately handled the Copeland Code Case. As mentioned above in **Section III(C)(1)**, Code was wrong and should have listed Commissioner Curry as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case due to the lack of an anonymous complainant or a likely imminent threat. Notwithstanding, there is no evidence to suggest Code violated applicable Florida Statutes. *See* **Ex. 7**, § 162.06(b), *Fla. Stat.* Moreover, Commissioner Curry's communications and complaints to Mr. Cornman regarding the Copelands' Property are public records pursuant to Florida Statute § 119, which further invalidates any claim for anonymity. *See* **Ex. 7,** § 119, *Fla. Stat*. Second, even if Code had disclosed Commissioner Curry's identity (despite the fact evidence suggests the Copelands had independent knowledge of Commissioner Curry being the complainant), there is no evidence that it did so retaliatorily and there were no negative implications associated with Commissioner Curry being identified by Code.

Code's activity on the Copeland Code Case is sufficiently detailed in Code Case Detailed Activity Report CE-25-01499. *See* **Ex. 5**. All other relevant documents, communications and video footage suggest the Copeland Code Case was appropriately handled (but for Mr. Galloway turning off his body camera). *See* **Exs. 5, 18**; **Vid. Exs. B-D**. Code accurately identified LDC violations on the Copelands' Property and in response, the Copelands promptly and sufficiently cured the LDC violations. *See* **Ex. 5**. Although Code was called to the Copelands' Property multiple times, Mr. Copeland was adamant in stating that he did not believe Code or any Code employee did anything wrong as it relates to the Copeland Code Case, and that his only frustration was being reported for LDC violations. Lastly, and other than Mr. Galloway's violations and the fact that Commissioner Curry should have been identified as the compliant in appropriate documentation, there is no evidence to suggest any Policies were violated by Code in conducting the Copeland Code Case. *See* **Ex. 6**, generally.

6) Although not tasked to determine whether Commissioner Curry violated applicable laws or misused his official position, the facts regarding this allegation by County employees suggest, at a minimum, Commissioner Curry engaged with and had access to County Departments in a capacity that ordinary citizens do not, and Commissioner Curry utilized this unique access to matters of likely a personal nature rather than to address broader County business.

As stated above herein in the **Scope of Investigation (Section II(F))**, the undersigned was not tasked with determining whether Commissioner Curry improperly used his position as Commissioner in violation of Florida Statute § 112 as any such determination would be only within the purview of the Ethics Commission. However, the undersigned *was* tasked with analyzing applicable Florida Statutes and Policies in conjunction with the facts and circumstances presented in this Investigation to make the determinations specifically included in the **Scope of Investigation (Section II(F))**, and to opine on recommended actions for the County to take as a result of such determinations.

In light of this limited scope, evidence suggests Commissioner Curry engaged with and had access to Code and other County Departments and resources that a regular citizen would not have access to. Furthermore, Commissioner Curry likely utilized this unique access to address personal complaints and grievances rather than to address overall County business. However, it would be appropriate for the Ethics Commission, not HGRS, to determine if this behavior constitutes a violation of any applicable Florida Statute.

Evidence, including but not limited to Commissioners Curry's own statements, indicates Commissioner Curry did not go through normal channels to file a Code complaint when he initiated the Copeland Code Case. Instead, Commissioner Curry directly contacted the Director of Code, Mr. Cornman via phone calls and text messages to address personal grievances with the Copelands. *See* **Exs. 14-16**. Commissioner Curry texted Mr. Cornman about his complaints on multiple occasions, including on weekends and on Father's Day [Sunday, June 15, 2026] *See* **Ex. 14**. Mr. Copeland raised this issue when he stated, as a private citizen, he could not directly call or text the Director of Code to request investigations. Mr. Copeland also made a point to state he could not text Code employees on a weekend to make complaints. Commissioner Curry's unfettered direct line of communication to Mr. Cornman is unique to his role as a Commissioner and is not something normal citizens have access to. Commissioner Curry made complaints of an arguable personal nature related to the Copelands and in doing so arguably created an appearance or perception of impropriety that could have been avoided by utilizing standard channels of communication with County Departments. In the undersigned's view, Commissioner Curry's communications with Mr. Cornman regarding the Copelands' Property are distinguishable from a Commissioner approaching a County employee about more general, overarching concerns regarding County business, which is likely within the purview and duties of a Commissioner.

Although Commissioner Curry prefaced his complaints as coming from his neighbors and maintains he was merely relaying information from other concerned citizens, the greater weight of

evidence suggests Commissioner Curry's complaints regarding the Copelands were actually more personal in nature and not in the context of overall County concerns. While it is possible one or some of Commissioner Curry's neighbors may have mentioned the Copelands' Property, no evidence has been presented, including from Commissioner Curry, that affirmatively confirms the complaints regarding the Copelands solely came from neighbors. Even if one of Commissioner Curry's neighbors approached him about their complaints about the Copelands, in the undersigned's opinion, the appropriate response would have been for Commissioner Curry to direct such person to the Code office to file a formal complaint, not for Commissioner Curry to directly relay the complaints via text message to the Director of Code. Moreover, the conditions reported at the Copelands' Property were the same conditions Ms. Curry previously complained to the Copelands about, and the Currys and the Copelands are neighboring homeowners, which is further evidence that Commissioner Curry's complaints were personal in nature and were not related to overall County concerns.

7) Evidence suggests that Code merely informed the Copelands of the proper protocol for filing a complaint in direct response to the Copelands' informal complaints regarding the Currys' Property.

The far greater weight of evidence suggests the Copelands, on their own independent volition, initiated the Curry Code Case against the Currys' Property as opposed to anyone from Code urging or encouraging them to do so. Commissioner Curry's allegation that Code was involved in and/or encouraged the Copelands to initiate the Curry Code Case cannot be substantiated. Evidence instead indicates Code merely instructed the Copelands on the appropriate channel to file a Code complaint in direct response to the Copelands' informal complaints about the Currys' Property.

Following Mr. Copeland's testimony under oath at the December 15, 2025 ZBA hearing[67] when he stated, "Code Compliance told us to do this," Commissioner Curry alleged that Code told the Copelands to file a Code complaint against the Currys' Property. *See* ZBA hearing footage at 38:45 - 39:16. While Mr. Copeland himself acknowledged his statements could be misinterpreted to suggest Code instructed him to file the Curry Code Case, Mr. Copeland, however, was adamant that Code did not encourage or instruct him to make a complaint, and only informed him of the process of how to make a Code complaint. Mr. Copeland also stated when he referenced "other things happening," he was referring the harassment that he was experiencing from the Currys. Mr. Copeland stated Code did not direct him in any way to make a complaint against Commissioner Curry, and that he did it all on his own with no encouragement from any third party.

[67] As it relates to the veracity and interpretation of Mr. Copeland's December 15, 2025 testimony at ZBA hearing, Mr. Copeland was incorrect in stating Code first noted the Curry Code Case (specifically related to the Rebar, Shed and Driveways) in 2022. Detailed Code Report CE-22-0079 was initiated against the Currys' Property in 2022, was related to a political sign and was ultimately resolved. *See* **Ex. 3**. In his interview, Mr. Copeland stated his comments about the 2022 Code case were a result of a misunderstanding and not related to the present dispute.

Considering Mr. Copeland's statements at the ZBA hearing in the context of the Copeland Code Case and the dispute between the Currys and the Copelands, it is more than likely that Mr. Copeland's statements were indeed taken out of context by Commissioner Curry and were misinterpreted to inaccurately suggest Code told Mr. Copeland to initiate the Curry Code Case.

Notably, Mr. Copeland stated before he filed his complaint against the Currys' Property that he knew there were conditions on the Currys' Property that were not in compliance with LDC. This can be seen in Ms. Hicks' body camera footage from June 26, 2025 when Mr. Copeland mentioned the Currys' Rebar and Shed to Ms. Hicks. *See* **Vid. Ex. B**. In this video, Ms. Hicks does not directly respond to Mr. Copeland regarding the Rebar or Shed mentioned by Mr. Copeland, other than Ms. Hicks clarifying which rebar Mr. Copeland was referring to. *See* **Vid. Ex. B**. Mr. Copeland stated he pointed things out to Code, but Code said they could not do anything unless an official complaint was filed. Mr. Copeland stated Code told him he would have to go through the formal process and file an official Code complaint. Mr. Copeland stated he then called the Code office to complaint regarding the Currys' Property.

Evidence suggests it is not uncommon for feuding neighbors to complain of various LDC violations against each other to Code. Evidence further suggests that in response to informal complaints, Code Officers are instructed to inform that person of the appropriate channel and the process to file a formal Code complaint. Ms. Hicks stated she has a dialogue similar to this on ninety-five percent (95%) of the cases she works. As stated in **Section III(C)(5)** above, all evidence suggests Code acted appropriately when the Copelands told Code the Currys had non-compliant conditions at their property by telling the Copelands they could file a complaint.

Importantly, during his interview, Commissioner Curry stated he did not believe Code merely informed the Copelands of the process of how to file a complaint after the Copelands inquired, however, he could not state a reason for his belief. Commissioner Curry then changed the topic to an unrelated dispute the Copelands had with their next-door neighbor. In sum, all evidence presented suggests Code did not have any involvement in the initiation of the Curry Code Case other than directing the Copelands on the process and processing the formal complaint made by the Copelands.

8) Code appropriately handled the Curry Code Case and there is no evidence to suggest Code violated any Policy, Code Policy or Florida Statute. Significantly, Code *did not* selectively enforce LDC violations at the Currys' Property as alleged by Commissioner Curry, primarily because: (1) the Currys' Property *did* have three (3) LDC violations; and, (2) the other properties identified by Commissioner Curry (other than one) do not have any reported LDC violations or resulting Code cases.

Despite Commissioner Curry's contentions as alleged in his 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint (**Ex. 1**), broadcasted on Facebook (**Exs. 19-20, 34, 45, 47, 53, 55-56; Vid. Exs. I-J, M-N, Q**), and as alleged in his interviews, all evidence suggests Code appropriately handled the Curry Code Case, and there is no evidence to suggest Code selectively enforced any LDC violations at the

Currys' Property. Additionally, there is no evidence to suggest Code violated any Florida Statute, Code Policy or Policy in conducting the Curry Code Case. *See* **Exs. 6-8**, generally.

Commissioner Curry confirmed the LDC violations at his property were related to his Shed and Driveway. Commissioner Curry stated he learned about the setback on his property only *after* he purchased his Shed. As for the Driveway, Commissioner Curry stated he installed a half circle driveway in the front of his house in addition to the original driveway at his property. Commissioner Curry claimed that one of his driveways is not on a County-maintained road, so the LDC requirement that a driveway cannot be more than 20 feet in width does not apply to his driveway[68]. *See* **Ex. 32**, *§ 5.04.04, LDC.* Code's activity at the Currys' Property is sufficiently detailed in Code Case Detailed Activity Report CE-25-01709 *See* **Ex. 4**. Code accurately identified three (3) LDC violations on the Currys' Property. *See* **Ex. 4; Ex. 32,** *§§ 1.13.06 5.04.04, 5.0.03, 5.04.06, LDC*.

The Rebar was flagged as a violation of LDC § 5.04.06(B)(6) which states, in pertinent part, "[m]aterials placed in the right-of-way without a County executed right of-way agreement may become the property of the County." *See* **Ex. 4; Ex. 32,** *§ 5.04.04, LDC*. The Shed was flagged as a violation of LDC §5.00.03 for being placed within the Building Setback Requirements. *See* **Ex. 4; Ex. 32,** *§ 5.0.03, LDC*. Lastly, the Driveways were flagged[69] as a violation of LDC § 1.13.06 for failure to obtain proper permits and/or approvals for the Driveways. *See* **Ex. 4; Ex. 32,** *§ 1.13.06, LDC*. Commissioner Curry confirmed the horseshoe-shaped Driveway was added onto the Currys' Property in addition to the original Driveway. LDC § 5.04.04(B)(5) states, in pertinent part, "[s]ingle family residential driveways shall be limited to a maximum of 20 feet in width when connecting to a County maintained roadway. Dual one-way access is permitted provided the combined width of the connections do not exceed 20 feet." *See* **Ex. 32,** *§ 5.04.04, LDC*. Evidence suggests the Currys' Driveways cumulatively exceed the permitted 20 feet. *See* **Ex. 4.** As a result of the LDC violations at the Currys' Property, Commissioner Curry removed the Rebar (which brought this LDC violation into compliance) and submitted the Curry Variance Application for his Shed and Driveways. *See* **Ex. 22**. Commissioner Curry ultimately obtained the Granted Curry Variance for the Shed and Driveways.[70] *See* **Ex. 33**.

Mr. Cornman stated Code investigating the Currys' Property was only as a direct result of the Copelands' complaint. Mr. Cornman further stated he believed no one in Code had any ill intent when investigating the Currys' Property. Mr. Baza, the Code Officer assigned to the Curry Code Case, provided statements that the Currys' Code Case was typical and conducted within the

[68] Whether Oakplace Road, the road that one of the Driveways sits on, is a County maintained road, is, in fact, not significant for purposes of this analysis.

[69] Evidence suggests Mr. Baza noted the Driveways on or around August 28, 2025, and that the Copelands reported the Driveways on or around September 10, 2025. Accordingly, Code was both reactive and proactive when addressing the Driveways.

[70] Mr. Copeland later appealed the Granted Curry Variance. *See* **Ex. 37**.

ordinary course of business. All other documents and communications related to the Curry Code Case suggest the Curry Code Case was appropriately handled. *See* **Ex. 4.**

Commissioner Curry contends Code selectively enforced against him because many properties in his neighborhood have the same conditions that would be in violation of LDC such as driveways that exceed the permitted footage and violations related to sheds. Commissioner Curry further contends that he believes Code is a proactive agency yet failed to address any of these similar conditions in his neighborhood. Commissioner Curry's statements changed in his (second) March 27, 2026 interview when he stated Code did *not* proactively go after him, and that Code was reactive after the Copelands filed a complaint, however according to Commissioner Curry, on many occasions Code says they are reactive but then are proactive in other situations.

After a thorough analysis of all evidence, the undersigned has determined Code did not selectively enforce any LDC violations at the Currys' Property. The primary facts supporting this determination are: (1) the Currys' Property *did* have three LDC violations as properly noted in the Curry Code Case (**Ex. 4**), and, (2) the other properties identified by Commissioner Curry (other than one as discussed herein below) do not have any reported LDC violations or Code cases. *See* **Exs. 4, 32**.

Commissioner Curry provided HGRS with a list of addresses[71] in his neighborhood he believed had similar LDC violations to those identified at his property. After conducting a public records search to determine if any of the properties identified by Commissioner Curry had reported LDC violations or Code cases, it was determined that only one (1) out of the eleven (11) properties identified by Commissioner Curry had a Code case. Specifically, Code Case Detailed Activity Report CE-25-01406 was opened on April 25, 2025 after Mr. Copeland complained that his neighbors, Peggy Sabella and Sam Sabella Jr. (collectively, the "Sabellas") [72], had a shed placed in the setback on their property (the "Sabellas' Code Case"). *See* **Ex. 31**. The case was eventually closed on or around July 29, 2025 after the shed was moved out of the setback. Other than the Sabellas Code Case, which notably did not involve a driveway, evidence suggests there are no other documented LDC violations or Code cases regarding the properties identified by Commissioner Curry. Commissioner Curry also stated he was not aware of any complaints regarding the alleged forty (40) driveways in his neighborhood he believed were not in compliance with LDC.

[71] A public records request was conducted regarding the following properties: (1) 625 Waterview Cove Drive; (2) 166 Waterview Cove Drive; (3) 343 Waterview Cove Drive; (4) 166 Cypress Place; (5) 699 Waterview Cove Drive; (6) 823 Waterview Cove Drive; (7) 8 Waterview Place; (8) 702 Waterview Cove Road; (9) 675 Waterview Cove; (10) 823 Waterview Cove; and (11) 845 Waterview Cove.

[72] Mr. Copeland did not mention his dispute with the Sabellas or their Code case during his interview, however Commissioner Curry was likely referencing the Sabellas during his interview when he mentioned Mr. Copeland having a dispute over a shed with another neighbor.

As detailed below in **Section III(C)(9)**, Code is *both* proactive and reactive. Conditions such as a shed in a setback or a driveway exceeding the permitted footage would be considered "reactive" as those conditions do not present an imminent threat to public health and safety or welfare or imminent destruction of habitat or sensitive resources. *See* **Exs. 7, 9**. Accordingly, Code should only address conditions such as sheds in setbacks or driveways in response to complaints received outside of Code. *See* **Ex. 9**. Ms. Hicks stated there was no selective enforcement of LDC violations against Commissioner Curry because at the end of the day, there *were* LDC violations at the Currys' Property. In fact, Ms. Hicks stated Code gave Commissioner Curry additional time to come into compliance and to obtain his variances, which is something they normally do not do.

It is the undersigned's strong opinion that Code did not selectively choose to enforce LDC violations at the Currys' Property while ignoring similar LDC violations in the neighborhood. Instead, Code acted appropriately in only addressing violations once complained of.

Commissioner Curry also made complaints regarding the Copelands's Driveway. In several email correspondences, Commissioner Curry alleged the Copelands' driveway is not incompliance with LDC, which was not noted by Code Officers when they visited the Copelands' Property. *See generally* **Exs. 1, 20**. Commissioner Curry raised these concerns again on December 29, 2025 (**Ex. 1,** pgs. 44-46) and again on April 3, 2026 (**Ex. 20**, pgs. 12-18). Despite these complaints, Commissioner Curry acknowledged in his interview he has *not* filed a Code complaint against the Copelands' driveway. Commissioner Curry also mentioned an elderly lady in his neighborhood (likely, Ms. Sabella) that had a shed which the Copelands reported a LDC violation on, and that Code had to walk across a non-compliant driveway to "slap a sticker" on her shed. No evidence has been presented to suggest that: (1) Code proactively determined the Copelands' driveway was out of LDC compliance; or, (2) anyone filed a Code complaint against the Copelands for their driveway.

Notably, Commissioner Curry did not report the Copelands' driveway to Code when he reported the other LDC violations.

There is not enough evidence for the undersigned to determine whether the Copelands' driveway is in compliance with LDC or whether Code should have or actually did note the Copelands' driveway while visiting the Copelands' Property. Accordingly, the undersigned suggests for Code to provide Commissioner Curry with information supporting why an LDC violation was not noted for the Copelands' driveway, or (2) if the Copelands' driveway is not in compliance with LDC requirements, notify the Copelands so they can come into compliance. Notwithstanding, there is no evidence to suggest Code intentionally overlooked any conditions on the Copelands' Property that may not be in compliance with LDC.

9) Code is both proactive and reactive dependent upon the particular and specific circumstances of each case. Such determination hinges on a fact-specific analysis, therefore Code cannot be summarily categorized as either proactive or reactive. Accordingly, Commissioner Curry's contention that Code is proactive on some cases and reactive on others is actually correct, but insignificant considering Code sufficiently and appropriately handled the Copeland and Curry Code Cases.

Throughout this Investigation, Commissioner Curry has questioned whether Code is a proactive or reactive Department. Commissioner Curry contends that Code[73] claims to be a complaint driven, reactive Department but they (allegedly) proactively go after individuals for non-compliance selectively.

Simply stated, Code is *both* a reactive and proactive Department. Categorizing Code as either "proactive" or "reactive" is an oversimplification because every case requires a fact-specific analysis to determine if Code was acting in a proactive or reactive manner.

As a threshold matter, and in furtherance of the fact that Code can be both proactive and reactive, depending on the circumstances, Code is in the process of updating its written Street Code Compliance Operational Procedures (Code's "Draft SOPs"). *See* **Ex. 9**. Code shared the Draft SOPs with HGRS for purposes of this Investigation. Draft SOP 2.1 defines[74] "Proactive" as "all officer-initiated activities which are based on the officer's observations, or the identification of violations that present an imminent threat to public health and safety or welfare or imminent destruction of habitat or sensitive resources." *See* **Ex. 9**, *Draft SOP 2.1*. Draft SOP 2.1 defines "Reactive" as "officers responding to complaints received from outside of the Walton County Code Compliance Department." *See* **Ex. 9**, *Draft SOP 2.1*. The procedures included in the Draft SOPs state that Code Officers "may initiate investigations of property violations through "Proactive" and "Reactive" protocols." *See* **Ex. 9,** *Draft SOP 2.100*. "Proactive enforcement also includes special directives from the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to identify and address all observable violations within a specific region, town, or area within the county." *See* **Ex. 9,** *Draft SOP 2.101*. The procedures included in the Draft SOPs also state, "[r]eactive complaints are received through emails, phone calls, in-person, and use of the County's website through the complaint portal. Per Florida Statute Chapter 162, complainants must provide their name and address. Complainants shall also provide the location and description of the complaint. An exemption to the name and address requirement exists if the violation presents an imminent threat to public health and safety or welfare or imminent destruction of habitat or sensitive resources. "*See* **Ex. 9,** *Draft SOP 2.102*. Code's draft definition and expectations of a proactive case algin with the requirements of Florida Statute § 162. *See* **Ex. 7**, § 162.06(b), *Fla. Stat*.

[73] Commissioner Curry's complaints are seemingly only directed at Street Code Compliance, not Beach Code Compliance.

[74] Code's Draft SOPs are subject to change as these documents were shared in draft document form.

All relevant witness statements reviewed by HGRS also support that Code is both proactive and reactive. Mr. Cornman stated that if Code gets a complaint regarding a location and a Code Officer clearly sees another violation at that location, Code tries to handle that additional LDC violation as a matter of efficiency, so Code does not get called back to that same location multiple times. Mr. Cornman clarified this policy is specific to the property being investigated and would not apply to neighboring properties unless someone filed a Code complaint against such neighboring property.

Mr. Baza stated Code is only complaint driven when it comes to sheds. Mr. Baza stated Code can be proactive when it is a safety concern for public health and gave examples of clearings and preservations. Mr. Baza stated if it is not a public safety and health issue, Code can only be reactive to formal complaints. Mr. Baza also stated Code can act proactively on a property that has a Code complaint for the purpose of efficiency and not having to go back to one property multiple times.

Ms. Hicks stated that while Code is often a reactive, complaint driven department, there is some proactive leeway for environmentally sensitive conditions such as clearings, signage in the right of way, public safety, health safety and other things that do not require a complainant. Mr. Kellenberger also made these distinctions in an email to Commissioner Curry dated April 2, 2026 stating, "SOP is to be reactive on property based complaints (Street Code), except in public safety or health concern non-compliant issues and looking for other possible non-compliant issues when investigating complaints. SOP is to be proactive on Beach Code non-compliant issues." *See* **Ex. 20**, pg. 8.

It is easily determinable that Code acts reactively to Code cases formally initiated through the Code office but also acts proactively on those "reactive" cases to efficiently address any other readily determinable LDC violations on that property. It is also easily determinable that Code acts proactively when met with conditions that require immediate attention such as imminent threats to public health and safety or welfare or imminent destruction of habitat or sensitive resources.

When asked if he believed Code was being proactive towards him, Commissioner Curry summarily stated he thought Code was being selective towards him and that he thinks Code is reactive towards him for pointing out policies that are broken within the Code Department. This comment was seemingly in reference to Commissioner Curry's public criticism of the County's compliance with the LDC at County-owned properties. At a different point in his (second) March 27, 2026 interview, Commissioner Curry stated Code did *not* proactively go after him, and that Code was reactive after the Copelands filed a complaint, and that Code says they are reactive but then act proactively in other situations. To this end, Commissioner Curry is correct - Code *is* proactive on some cases and reactive on others, however it is not improper for Code to act in either manner upon consideration of the circumstances of each case.

During his (second) March 27, 2026 interview, Commissioner Curry stated he saw a text message from Ms. Hicks saying she would open a proactive case on a pump when no complaint

was filed. On June 2, 2025, Ms. Hicks texted Mr. Cornman stating, "[t]here is not an open case on 599 Waterview Cove [the Copelands' Property]. For the loud pump. Do you want me to open a case? If so who is the complaint?" *See* **Ex. 17**, pgs. 20-21. Mr. Cornman responded stating, "I thought I remembered us talking about the pump and it being in the preservation area (maybe Im wrong). If that is the case and we are aware of it not sure we need a complainant since its in preservation." *See* **Ex. 17**, pgs. 20-21. Ms. Hicks replied that she would "open a proactive case on the pump in the preservation." *See* **Ex. 17**, pgs. 20-21. Commissioner Curry also posted these text messages on Facebook stating*:*

> So, are we Pro-active or are we reactive? I've heard on many occasions Code enforcement is "Complaint Drive" reactive…The below is just one conversation from a public records request…I'll start posting some of these off and on so you can make that decision for yourselves. Are we "Selective" in what we do?

See **Exs. 28**; **55**. When asked if this text was in response to Commissioner Curry's complaint about the Copelands' Property[75], Commissioner Curry stated he didn't say anything to Mr. Cornman about a pump, however these text messages seemingly *are* in response to Commissioner Curry's complaints to Mr. Cornman regarding the Copelands' Property. *See* **Ex. 17**, pgs. 20-21. Commissioner Curry's concerns regarding this text exchange are unfounded. As supported by evidence and notwithstanding the above analysis of the applicability of Florida Statute § 162.06(b) to the Copeland Code Case (**Section III(C)(1)**), the complaint regarding the pump in the preservation area was treated as a threat to an environmentally sensitive area and therefore was a proactive case. Any concern that Code was acting proactively here yet reactively elsewhere is unfounded as Code is both proactive and reactive, depending on the circumstances.

In the Curry Code Case, Code was reactive to the reported LDC violations. Code was then proactive in addressing any other readily determinable LDC violations at the Currys' Property, such as the Driveways. Commissioner Curry claims Code was selective in calling out his Driveways, however evidence suggests the Copelands also reported the Driveways to Code, in which case Code was reactive to that report. *See* **Ex 5**.

For one to classify a particular Code case as "proactive" or "reactive," it would be necessary to analyze the specific facts and circumstances of that case. Ultimately, whether Code is proactive, reactive, or both, is somewhat insignificant for purposes of this Investigation considering Code acted appropriately in handling both the Curry and Copeland Code Cases and did not selectively enforce or selectively not enforce any LDC violations at the Currys's Property, as discussed in **Section III(C)(8)** above.

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[75] As stated herein above, while Commissioner Curry stated he believed this text message was not related to the Copeland Code Case, it is evident the text message *is* in fact related to the Copeland Code Case because Ms. Hicks and Mr. Corman are clearly texting about the Copelands' Property located at 599 Waterview Cove. *See* **Ex. 17,** pgs. 20-21. Additionally, the photographs Commissioner Curry sent to Mr. Cornman of the "pipe" and/or "pump" at the Copelands' Property are the same photographs Mr. Cornman shared with Ms. Hicks. *See* **Exs. 14, 15**.

10) It was appropriate for Code to not issue LDC violations to neighboring properties identified by Commissioner Curry during the Curry Code Case because other than the Sabella's Code Case which was appropriately handled by Code, there are no official Code complaints against any of the identified properties.

Commissioner Curry contends Code selectively enforced LDC violations at his property while ignoring similar conditions in his neighborhood. Commissioner Curry submitted several photos and demonstrative aids identifying properties in his neighborhood he believes also have LDC violations. *See* **Ex. 1**, pgs. 5-13; 31-32; 34-43; 57; 60-78. In an email dated March 18, 2026, Commissioner Curry alleged he identified at least twenty-eight (28) driveways not in compliance with the LDC requirement because they exceed the permitted 20-foot width, and he believed there were "possibly 66 more." *See* **Ex. 20**, pg. 1. Commissioner Curry also stated, "with code being selective on when they choose to be pro-active vs. reactive (Espesially [sic] in my case) why would they not do anything about these?" *See* **Ex. 20**, pg. 1.

Commissioner Curry provided HGRS with a list of addresses in his neighborhood: (1) 625 Waterview Cove Drive; (2) 166 Waterview Cove Drive; (3) 343 Waterview Cove Drive; (4) 166 Cypress Place; (5) 699 Waterview Cove Drive; (6) 823 Waterview Cove Drive; (7) 8 Waterview Place; (8) 702 Waterview Cove Road; (9) 675 Waterview Cove; (10) 823 Waterview Cove; and (11) 845 Waterview Cove. As stated herein in **Section III(C)(8)**, after conducting a public records search, it was determined that only one (1) out of the eleven (11) reported properties had a Code case – the Sabellas' Code Case. *See* **Ex. 31**. There is no evidence to suggest the Sabella's Code Case was handled differently than the Currys or Copeland Code Cases or that Code enforced LDC violations at the Currys' Property that it did not at the Sabellas. *See* **Exs. 4, 31**. The Sabellas' Code Case was initiated by a formal complaint, and Code identified three LDC violations related to the Sabellas' shed. *See* **Ex. 31**. The Sabellas' Code Case was closed after the shed at issue was removed from the setbacks. *See* **Ex. 31**. Other than the Sabellas' Code Case, there are no other Code cases associated with the above-listed properties.

Although Code's written SOPs are still undergoing amendments, Code's procedures related to reactive and proactive enforcement are clear. Conditions such as a driveway exceeding the permitted footage would be generally considered "reactive" as those conditions do not present an imminent threat to public health and safety or welfare or imminent destruction of habitat or sensitive resources. *See* **Exs. 7, 9**. Code had no responsibility to enforce Code proceedings and issue LDC violations at these properties while also conducting the Curry Code Case, and allegations by Commissioner Curry that Code selective in its enforcement concerning his Property are unfounded.

11) The BPR was not selectively enforced against Commissioner Curry, and Commissioner Curry was ultimately relieved of any BPR requirements and received a $100.00 refund for his application fee.

Commissioner Curry has also taken issue with not only having to obtain a variance for his LDC violations, but with having to go through the BPR process[76] for his shed. *See* **Exs. 43-45, 48; Video Exs. L, J, M**. Commissioner Curry stated he had to pay for a survey, and that the entire variance process cost him around $2,000[77]. Commissioner Curry contended the Copelands did not have to pay for anything [in relation to the LDC violations at their property], and that they were only required to move their things out of the road. Notably, the Copelands promptly resolved all LDC violations and did not apply for any variances. There is no evidence to suggest the BPR process was selectively enforced against Commissioner Curry, and Commissioner Curry was ultimately relieved of any BPR requirements.

In relation to his complaints, on February 4, 2026, Commissioner Curry requested all records related to all County-owned buildings, including documentation related to the BPR and As Built Surveys. *See* **Ex. 19**, pg. 20. Mr. Schoen stated he understood that Commissioner Curry requested records of everything that was ever done on any parcel that the County owns, which is around 400 parcels, and that Planning staff has started a repository of this information.

Evidence suggests that before Commissioner Curry's complaints arose, and unrelated to the subject matter of this Investigation, Mr. Kellenberger and Mr. Schoen started an assessment of the BPR process in conjunction with the requirements of the LDC. Mr. Kellenberger stated he and Mr. Schoen identified redundancies and duplications of information and items that were not necessary in the BPR. Mr. Kellenberger stated one of the BPR items identified related to requirements for accessory structures. Mr. Schoen stated he was unaware that Planning was requiring the BPR process for structures that do not need a permit. Evidence suggests Mr. Schoen and Mr. Kellenberger determined in North Walton or north of the Choctawhatchee Bay, if a structure is under 400 square feet and does not require electrical or plumbing permits, it does not need to undergo the BPR process and does not need an As Built Survey.

In an email dated March 31, 2026, Commissioner Curry asked Mr. Kellenberger, "[h]as the policy on accessory structures now been updated to apply to all citizens concerning this LDC issue, so the codes Dept understands?" *See* **Ex. 20**, pg. 9. Mr. Kellenberger responded on April 2, 2026

[76] Mr. Schoen stated the BPR process is specifically intended to review properties for consistency and conformity of LDC prior to a property being reviewed by the Building Department for permits. Mr. Schoen also stated during the BPR process, Planning specifically looks at things such as setbacks, access, legal status and wetlands, and that there are different expectations for different areas of the County.

[77] Various dollar amounts have been alleged throughout the course of this Investigation; however, the exact dollar amount is irrelevant for purposes of this Investigation.

stating, “The policy on BPR’s has been revised in understanding. Due to current language in the LDC (Section 1.13) – Development Approvals) this issue was able to be resolved through policy change and not text change. The new policy reflects that if a project does not need a building permit (or sub-building permit), is not located in a flood plain, and is north of the bay then the project does not need a BPR.” *See* **Ex. 20**, pg. 7.

Evidence suggests after Commissioner Curry began complaining about having to go through the BPR process and having to obtain an As Built Survey, Mr. Kellenberger reviewed Commissioner Curry’s relevant documents and information and determined the Currys’ Shed was less than 400 square feet, did not require electrical or plumbing permits, and that the Currys’ Property was in a flood X zone, so that the Shed did not need an As Built Survey and did not need to go through the BPR process. Mr. Kellenberger ultimately determined that the Currys’ should be relieved of those requirements. *See* **Ex. 22**. This determination is consistent with the documentation and statements presented in this Investigation. *See* **Exs. 4, 22.** Accordingly, the BPR process was not selectively enforced against Commissioner Curry. In addition, Commissioner Curry was issued a $100.00 refund on his BPR application.

12) <u>While it is not inherently improper for Commissioner Curry to question whether County-owned properties have LDC violations, evidence suggests Commissioner Curry only raised these concerns in response to Code finding LDC violations at the Currys’ Property. Thus, Commissioner Curry’s ongoing and continued public criticism of Code regarding alleged LDC violations on County-owned property is likely unjustified and retaliatory in nature.</u>

Commissioner Curry has been outspoken on social media about his criticism of Code. *See* **Exs. 41, 42, 45, 47, 49- 53, 55, 57; Vid. Exs. E, I, J, M-O, Q, R.** As a part of this criticism, beginning in February 2026, Commissioner Curry began making complaints that the County’s buildings, specifically the Code facilities at the South Walton Annex and Beach Operations, are not in compliance with LDC. While it was not inherently improper for Commissioner Curry to raise concerns about the County’s compliance with LDC, evidence suggests Commissioner Curry may have raised these concerns in response to Code finding LDC violations at his property. Thus, Commissioner Curry’s continued public criticism of Code regarding alleged LDC violations on County property is likely unjustified and retaliatory.

On February 4, 2026, Commissioner Curry made a public records request for the following information:

> the information from the time the LDC was implemented to current date for the following. I'd like a copy of all "As Built" surveys that pertain to county owned properties. I would also like to see all "pre plan applications" to include BPR sign offs for any structures on county owned property. I'd like to see any projects built on county owned property be it, pole barns, sheds, gazebos, playgrounds, sports facilities, add On's to current structures, parking lots, and so on as defined as needing an "As Built" survey described in the LDC.

> Still waiting on the actual code and the current surveys for the freeport complex and the south Walton annex to include the codes facility areas.

See **Ex. 19**, pg. 20. Mr. Schoen stated he understood that Commissioner Curry requested records of everything that was *ever* done on *any* parcel that the County owns, which is around 400 parcels, and that Planning staff has necessarily been forced to create a repository of this information.

Mr. Kellenberger stated Commissioner Curry asked him for the address to the Beach Code Operations facility, and on February 6, 2026 he received a text from Commissioner Curry with a picture of the Code building [at the South Walton Annex] asking why a public facility with a public office was behind a locked and closed gate. *See* **Ex. 30**. Mr. Kellenberger stated he responded to Commissioner Curry that his understanding was that Code keeps the gate closed and locked during non-operational hours as stated on the gate, and inquired if Commissioner Curry found it to be locked and closed during operational hours. Mr. Kellenberger stated he told Commissioner Curry that he would get Commissioner Curry access to the Code gate system. *See* **Ex. 30**. Commissioner Curry has continued to complain about this despite the fact he stated he has not tried again to get through the gate, and evidence suggests Commissioner Curry has not followed up regarding his access to this gate.

On February 9, 2026, Commissioner Curry emailed various County employees stating, in pertinent part "[i]t's very sad and disheartening that I have to say **I personally have ZERO faith in our codes Dept from <u>my own personal experiences</u>** as well as hearing from others (to include PRR requests with body cam footage)…" *See* **Ex. 19**, pgs. 1-2 (emphasis added). Commissioner Curry goes on to identify four (4) County properties he contends are not in compliance with LDC, including "the actual Code Compound at the south annex" and the "[Code] Beach Ops facility." *See* **Ex. 19,** pgs. 1-2. Two of the four identified properties are related to Code; the other two properties are the "Freeport Complex"[78] and Helen McCall Park. *See* **Ex. 19,** pgs. 1-2. Commissioner Curry also included various photographs of structures at the Beach Operations building, the Code office in South Walton, and Helen McCall Park that Mr. Kellenberger contends did not require permits. *See* **Ex. 19,** pgs. 4-12. Mr. Kellenberger also stated the bulk of the properties do not have any structures on them, but for the ones that do have structures, Mr. Schoen and Planning staff have gone though and attempted to find any associated development or building permits, and that some of the information requested by Commissioner Curry were items that may not normally be a part of the project - for example, not all projects require As Built surveys, permits, and development orders.

In addition, Commissioner Curry posted multiple photos and associated commentary about these properties on February 13, 2026, publicly criticizing Code and other County Departments stating, in pertinent part, "[l]et's mix all this Count Planning, permit and **codes** stuff a little more in case we aren't total asking WTH at this point already." *See* **Exs. 48-51** (emphasis added).

[78] Commissioner Curry did not specify the address for this property and did not include any photographs specific to this property.

Commissioner Curry raised the issue again in an email dated March 31, 2026 with a subject line, "Code concerns." *See* **Ex. 20**, pgs. 8-9. In this email, Commissioner Curry specifically identified Code again when stating, in pertinent part, "why was the LDC not followed as it was understood when placing accessory structures **on the code facilities lot**? **Yet in my case** I have received 2 phone calls asking for the as-built survey and BPR process **from codes**? That's Selective." *See* **Ex. 20**, pgs. 8-9 (emphasis added). In response, Mr. Kellenberger stated, "[t]his has been addressed. LTM's or Planning Director approvals forthcoming[79] on structures that were not permitted correctly at the Code compliance Facility and Bch Ops Facility." *See* **Ex. 20**, pg. 9.

Considering the timing, nature, verbiage, and personal references of Commissioner Curry's complaints, there is clearly evidence to suggest that Commissioner Curry's complaints against Code related to the County-owned properties are retaliatory in nature, regardless of any potential LDC violations at County-owned properties.

Importantly, HGRS was not tasked with determining if County-owned properties have active LDC violations, although evidence suggests that some of the properties at issues never had LDC violations, and conditions not in compliance with LDC are in the process of coming into compliance.[80] Notably, Commissioner Curry only made these complaints *after* Code issued LDC violations at this property, and *after* he obtained the Granted Curry Variance. Further notable is the fact that Commissioner Curry has not only primarily focused on Code-related County properties, but has also specifically identified Code in many of his complaints as the Department responsible for any LDC oversight. Commissioner Curry's own emails state that his complaints come *from his own personal experience with Code*, further evidencing a retaliatory nature of his complaints. *See* **Ex. 19**, pgs. 1-2.

While it is undisputed that Commissioner Curry, as both a citizen and a Commissioner, is entitled to raise his questions to the County, Commissioner Curry has continued to raise these issues and publicly criticize Code, despite the fact the County has seemingly addressed/or is actively addressing his concerns. The timing and ongoing nature of Commissioner Curry's complaints, in addition to the online commentary regarding his Code, is, in the undersigned's opinion, suggestive that Commissioner Curry's complaints are retaliatory in nature.

Notwithstanding, to the extent the alleged LDC violations on County-owned properties have not already been cured, the undersigned recommends for any non-compliant conditions on

[79] Planning provided HGRS with thousands of documents related to Commissioner Curry's public records request. It is understood that Planning is continuously working on Commissioner Curry's public records request, which involves a large volume of documents and information.

[80] In his interview, Mr. Kellenberger stated in 2008, the then-Planning Director determined the Beach Operations facility did not need to get building permits for sheds because it is State owned property and therefore not County property. Additionally, Mr. Kellenberger informed Commissioner Curry on April 2, 2026 that Planning's approvals on structures that were not permitted correctly are forthcoming. *See* **Ex. 20**, pg. 9.

County-owned property to be brought into compliance, which the County is apparently already addressing.

13) The factual allegations made against Commissioner Curry in the Ethics Complaints can be substantiated[81] and evidence suggests Commissioner Curry engaged in retaliatory behavior against Code employees after Code found LDC violations at the Currys' Property, and after Code employees filed Ethics Complaints against him. Additionally, evidence suggests Commissioner Curry created a hostile work environment for Code employees due, in part, to his continued undue public criticism of Code and social media activity.

Although this Investigation was initiated by Commissioner Curry's 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint that Code retaliated against him (**Ex. 1**), throughout this Investigation it has become somewhat apparent that Commissioner Curry has retaliated against Code and certain Code personnel, in part, for issuing LDC violations at the Currys' Property, and in part, for the filing of Ethics Complaints against him. During his February 12, 2026 interview, Mr. Cornman stated he believed Commissioner Curry was retaliating against Code. On March 7, 2026, County employees' complaints were formally added to the **Scope of Investigation (Section II(F))**. *See* **Ex. 23**, pg. 4. Many of Code employees' concerns with Commissioner Curry were detailed in the Ethics Complaints filed by Mr. Cornman and Mr. Gainey. *See* **Exs. 23-24**. Despite the Ethics Complaints being protected expressions pursuant to Florida Statute § 112[82], in direct response to the Ethics Complaints, Commissioner Curry likely subjected Code employees to further retaliatory behavior and a hostile work environment. *See* **Ex. 7,** § 112.3187, *Fla. Stat*.

Although the Ethics Commission is the only appropriate agency to address complaints filed with it and is presumably conducting an independent investigation in relation to whether Commissioner Curry misused his public position in violation of Florida Statute § 112 (**Ex. 7**) and/or the Code of Ethics provided in the Florida Constitution (**Ex. 39**), many of the allegations contained in the Ethics Complaints do overlap with the allegations and issues presented in this Investigation.

As a preliminary matter, it was alleged by Commissioner Curry that Code was possibly retaliating against him for mentioning Code fines in an August 2025 BCC meeting. The undersigned has found no evidence to support this contention, and evidence, in fact, suggests Code

[81] As noted, this is not to say that such allegations rise to the level of a violation of Florida law or are sufficient grounds for adverse action by the Ethics Commission against Commissioner Curry which determination is solely within the purview of the Ethics Commission and outside the purview of the undersigned.

[82] "An agency [any state, regional, county, local, or municipal government entity]… shall not take any adverse action that affects the rights or interests of a person in retaliation for the person's disclosure of information under this section." *See* Fla. Stat. § 112.3187(4)(b)*; see also* Fla. Stat. § 112.3187(3)(b).

had been working to improve the issue with fines before any issue between Commissioner Curry and Code arose.

Evidence further suggests many of the factual allegations made against Commissioner Curry in the Ethics Complaints are likely sustainable. After Code found LDC violations at the Currys' Property and after obtaining the Granted Curry Variance, Commissioner Curry began what could accurately be described as a campaign of public criticisms against Code and various Code employees. With the idea that reviewing and analyzing the totality of the circumstances is important in an Investigation of this nature, some Commissioner Curry's actions against Code include, but are not limited to:

- Commissioner Curry's general public criticism of Code on social media. *See* **Exs. 41-42, 45, 47-59; Vid. Exs. E, I, J, M-O, Q, R**;
- Commissioner Curry's ongoing complaints against Code related to Mr. Galloway's body camera footage, despite such complaint being sufficiently addressed in September 2025. *See generally* **Exs. 1, 20**; *See also* **Section III(C)(3)** above;
- Commissioner Curry's ongoing complaints regarding Code Officers' body camera footage related to the Copeland Code Case, generally. *See* **Ex. 1; Ex. 20,** pgs. 12-18**, Vid. Ex. J**. *See also* **Section III(C)(4)** above;
- Commissioner Curry's ongoing complaints against Code regarding Code allegedly improperly identifying him as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case. *See generally* **Exs. 1, 20;** *See also* **Section III(C)(1)** above;
- Commissioner Curry's ongoing complaints that Code selectively enforces the LDC. *See* **Ex 20**, pg. 8;
- Commissioner Curry's allegations that Code is at fault for not following LDC requirements at County-owned buildings, specifically including the Code office at the South Walton Annex and the Code Beach Operations facility in South Walton. *See* **Exs. 19, 20, 30**;
- Commissioner Curry's recent requests for Code employee information including the number of Code employees, Code's budget, and Code employees' salaries.[83] *See* **Exs. 20, 61**;
- Commissioner Curry's recent public commentary and criticism of Code vehicles and associated Code Policies. *See* **Ex. 20,** pgs. 7, 19;
- The actions detailed in Mr. Cornman's Ethics Complaint and subsequent related information. *See* **Exs. 23, 26, 27**;
- The actions detailed in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint and subsequent related information. *See* **Exs. 23, 24**; and

[83] In his April 30, 2026 email to Public Records, HR and Legal, Commissioner Curry stated he would be requesting similar information for other County Departments "in the future," however it is notable that is request is limited to Code, and evidence suggests Commissioner has not yet requested any information related to other Departments. *See* **Ex. 61**.

- Commissioner Curry's criticism of Code related to snipe signs even though he had voted in favor of reinstitution of the enforcement of such regulations. *See* **Ex. 21; Ex. 27,** pg. 20**; Ex. 28,** pg. 5**; Ex. 52; Vid. Ex. R**.

Commissioner Curry's actions are discussed point by point-by-point below, and viewed cumulatively, suggest a likelihood that Commissioner Curry has retaliated against Code and certain Code employees prior to and after the Ethics Complaints were filed, which has created a hostile work environment. The facts and circumstances alleged overlap with actions taken before and after the Ethics Complaints were filed and are addressed below in no particular order.

A. Commissioner Curry's Actions as Alleged by County Employees

i. Commissioner Curry's ongoing complaints against Code related to Mr. Galloway's body camera footage are retaliatory in nature considering the complaint was sufficiently addressed in September 2025.

The first allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint is that, "*Commissioner Curry began requesting information on the officers who worked his neighbor's case, in particular, body-worn camera footage. One of whom no longer works for the County and was disciplined according to the BCC policy for body-worn camera policy violations.*" *See* **Ex. 24**.

Commissioner Curry first complained about Mr. Galloway's body camera footage on September 3, 2025. *See* **Ex. 1,** pg. 18**; Ex. 14.** As discussed in **Section III(C)(3)**, Code promptly and sufficiently addressed this issue with Mr. Galloway, who ultimately resigned on September 24, 2025. *See* **Ex. 12**. Commissioner Curry was notified more than once, and at least once in writing, that Mr. Galloway was disciplined. *See* **Exs. 1, 4**. All evidence suggests Mr. Galloway's body camera Code Policy violation was an isolated incident. *See above* **Sections III(C)(2)-(4).** Despite this matter being fully resolved, Commissioner Curry brought his complaints to the County again in his 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint. *See* **Ex. 1**. Commissioner Curry continued to make complaints to Administration in March 2025, despite this ongoing Investigation. *See* **Ex. 20**, pg. 10. Commissioner Curry continued to send HGRS information regarding Mr. Galloway's body camera footage as recently as April 13, 2026. *See* **Ex. 20**, pg. 12. Commissioner Curry also discussed Mr. Galloway's body camera footage in his February 7, 2026 and March 5, 2026 Facebook videos *See* **Vid. Exs. N[84], J.** In a Facebook post dated Apil 21, 2026, Commissioner Curry stated, in response to the first allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint, "1. Once I received the complimentary records request that the Copelands requested that included emails, text messages and bodycam yes, I did especially after seeing on officer decided to shut his off during the call, but I was told body cam is only held for so long because of storage issues." *See* **Ex. 59**.

[84] To ensure comprehensive documentation, Commissioner Curry's March 5, 2026 Facebook video is also attached as **Video Exhibit E**.

Similar to the analysis in **Section III(C)(3)** above, evidence suggests Commissioner Curry has continued to make complaints regarding Mr. Galloway's body camera footage in retaliation against Code. Notwithstanding that Commissioner Curry was justified in making his original complaint about Mr. Galloway to Code in September 2025, because his complaints were addressed in their entirety, there is no justifiable or logical reason to continue to make these complaints other than to publicly chastise Code. Commissioner Curry's continued public commentary on Code as it relates to this one isolated incident has likely contributed to a hostile work environment.

ii. Commissioner Curry's ongoing complaints against Code regarding Code employees allegedly improperly identifying him as the complainant on the Copeland Code Case are at a minimum, meaningless and at most, retaliatory in nature, considering his communications with Mr. Cornman are public records.

The second allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint is that, "*Commissioner Curry alleged that Code Compliance officers suggested to the Copelands that he was the complainant in their case. HR investigated the allegation and determined that no further investigation was necessary*." *See* **Ex. 24**. Commissioner Curry raised this complaint originally in September 2025, and again in his 12/20/2025 Curry Complaint. *See generally,* **Ex. 1**. Commissioner Curry also discussed this allegation in his March 5, 2026 Facebook video. *See* **Vid. Ex. N**. In a Facebook post dated April 21, 2026, Commissioner Curry stated, in response to the second allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint, "2. We may need a class on investigations because the body cam i watched on at least 2 different occasions suggests otherwise." *See* **Ex. 59**.

As detailed in **Sections III(C)(2)-(4)** above, other than the isolated incident with Mr. Galloway, there is no evidence to support Commissioner Curry's allegations, and his continued complaints are unjustified and immaterial. These complaints could be considered retaliatory to the extent Commissioner Curry baselessly continues to blame Code for what he wrongly contends was an improper disclosure of his identity related to complaints regarding the Copelands' Property.

Regardless of what Code did or did not do, the more significant, *undisputed* fact is that Commissioner Curry made his complaints to Mr. Cornman through a public forum (i.e. cell phone). *See* **Ex. 14;** *see also* **Sections III(C)(1)-(2)**. Therefore, it is nonsensical and even retaliatory to continue to blame Code for lack of anonymity when it never existed and never was sought by Commissioner Curry to begin with. Furthermore, evidence suggests Commissioner Curry only became concerned with anonymity once the Copelands initiated the Curry Code Case, at which point Commissioner Curry blamed Code. At a minimum, Commissioner Curry's continued complaints in this regard are baseless for the reasons discussed in **Sections III(C)(1)-(2)** above.

iii. When viewed holistically and in conjunction with Commissioner Curry's other actions, Commissioner Curry expressing his frustrations with Code and Planning was likely in direct retaliation for Code finding LDC violation at the Currys' Property and Planning requiring him to go through the variance process, which likely subjected Code and Planning employees to a hostile work environment.

The third allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint is that, "*[d]uring meetings with Commissioner Curry, he made statements about his frustrations regarding his code case, including the processes he was having to go through and the money it was costing him." See* **Ex. 24**.

Mr. Gainey stated at every meeting he had with Commissioner Curry after the Curry Code Case was initiated, Commissioner Curry made some kind of jab about Code. Mr. Baronti made similar allegations regarding Commissioner Curry's behavior while working on the Curry Variance Application. Commissioner Curry has continuously complained about Code as documented in this Investigation. In a Facebook video dated February 7, 2026, Commissioner Curry indicated Code was selective and Code and/or Planning made him go through more "motions" (of coming into compliance with the LDC) because of his status as a Commissioner. *See* **Vid. Ex. J.** In his March 5, 2026 Facebook video, Commissioner Curry stated this allegation, "is all true"; "absa-damn-lutely I was frustrated"; and "absa-damn-lutely I was griping about… how much it was costing me." *See* **Vid. Ex. N**. In the same video Commissioner Curry indicated he was "guilty" of this allegation. *See* **Vid. Ex. N**.

During his March 27, 2026 interview, Commissioner Curry stated he "absolutely" said these things, and that any time he walked into Planning he had to pay a fee for something and going through the process opened his eyes on a lot of things. In a Facebook post dated Apil 21, 2026, Commissioner Curry stated, in response to the third allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint, "3. Yes, I did because I saw blatant selective enforcement activities documents, photo'd and submitted to include the counties disregard for the LDC on their projects and lack of enforcement on the same." *See* **Ex. 59**. Commissioner Curry also made reference to Code's "selectiveness" in a Facebook video dated March 11, 2026 where Commissioner Curry also addresses "hypocrisy." *See* **Vid. Ex. F**. In his March 27, 2026 interview, Commissioner Curry claimed he was upset at the flawed process and not with the Code, however Commissioner Curry's ongoing public criticism of Code suggests otherwise. *See* **Exs. 27, 41, 42, 45, 47, 49- 53, 55, 57; Vid. Exs. E, F, I, J, M-O, Q, R.**

In an email dated March 7, 2026, Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry's "ongoing conduct appears to be a deliberate attempt to intimidate, harass and undermine county staff in retaliation for filing of the company and for the department carrying out its lawful responsibilities." *See* **Ex. 23**, pg. 4. In a Facebook post made on March 9, 2026, Commissioner Curry questioned whether Code was proactive or reactive, and attached a copy of text messages between Mr. Cornman and Ms. Hicks. *See* **Exs. 28,** pg. 1; **55**. In this instance, Commissioner Curry specifically identified Ms. Hicks and publicly scrutinized her efforts to carry out her job duties, which creates

a hostile work environment. As stated herein above in **Section III(C)(4)** there is no evidence to suggest Ms. Hicks, or any other Code employee (other than Mr. Galloway) violated any Policy, Code Policy or Florida Statute, and Code employees acted appropriately when conducting the Copeland Code Case. Also as stated herein above in **Section III(C)(9)**, Code is both proactive and reactive, and Commissioner Curry's concerns as addressed in his March 9, 2026 Facebook post regarding Ms. Hicks stating she was going to open a "proactive" complaint are inconsequential. Code Officers followed their duties and responsibilities when conducting the Curry Code Case and *did not* selectively enforce LDC violations at the Currys' Property as alleged by Commissioner Curry. *See* **Section III(C)(8)**.

Commissioner Curry's frustrations regarding the Curry Code Case largely fail to address the undisputed fact that the Currys' Property did have LDC violations, which Code properly noted. *See* **Ex. 4**. Commissioner Curry has continued to criticize Code for simply fulfilling their job duties[85], which is retaliatory and nature and likely has subjected Code employees to a hostile work environment.

Furthermore, and as discussed herein below in **Section III(C)(14)**, Mr. Baronti was likely subjected to a hostile work environment when working with Commissioner Curry on the Curry Variance Application due to Commissioner Curry's outspoken resistance to the variance process, apparently threatening Mr. Baronti, and later by posting about Mr. Baronti on Facebook. It is reasonable to assume County employees will feel subjected to a hostile work environment when they are endlessly criticized for merely doing their jobs, as has likely happened here with Commissioner Curry's outspoken public criticism of Code and Planning employees.

iv. Commissioner Curry's recent criticism of the Code Compliance Office in South Walton was likely retaliatory in nature and admittedly stemmed from his own personal interactions with Code.

Regardless of any potential LDC violations at the properties identified by Commissioner Curry (such topic is addressed in **Section III(C)(12)**) considering the timing, nature, verbiage and references to personal issues of Commissioner Curry's complaints, Commissioner Curry's complaints against Code related to the County-owned properties are likely retaliatory in nature.

The fifth allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint is that, "*Commissioner Curry recently went to the Code Compliance Office in South Walton before business hours, took pictures of our sheds and buildings, and then posted them on Facebook, questioning whether our buildings were permitted. He also went to Walton County Beach Operations and did the same thing*." *See* **Ex. 24**. In his March 27, 2026 interview Commissioner Curry stated he was "absolutely guilty" of these allegations.

[85] The only known Code Policy violation resulting from the Curry Code Case related to Mr. Galloway's body camera footage, which has been addressed multiple times herein.

On February 4, 2026, Commissioner Curry made a public records request related to this complaint. *See* **Ex. 19**, pg. 20. On February 6, 2026 Commissioner Curry texted a picture of the Code building (at the South Walton Annex) to Mr. Kellenberger asking why a public facility with a public office was behind a locked and closed gate. *See* **Ex. 30**. Commissioner Curry emailed his complaints to the County regarding these properties on February 9, 2026. *See* **Ex. 19**. Mr. Cornman stated on February 9, 2026, he submitted an addendum to his complaint following Commissioner Curry's February 6, 2026 complaints regarding the Code office gate being locked. *See* **Ex. 23**, pg. 9. On February 9, 2026, Commissioner Curry emailed various County employees stating, in pertinent part "[i]t's very sad and disheartening that I have to say **I personally have ZERO faith in our codes Dept from <u>my own personal experiences</u>** as well as hearing from others (to include PRR requests with body cam footage)" *See* **Ex. 19** (emphasis added).

In addition, Commissioner Curry posted multiple photos and associated commentary about these properties (*See* **Exs. 40-44, 48-51**), and on February 13, 2026, publicly criticized Code and other County Departments stating, in pertinent part, "[l]et's mix all this Count Planning, permit and **codes** stuff a little more in case we aren't total asking WTH at this point already." *See* **Exs. 48-51** (emphasis added). Commissioner Curry raised the issue again in an email dated March 31, 2026 with a subject line that reads, "Code concerns." *See* **Ex. 20**, pgs. 8-9. In this email, Commissioner Curry specifically identified Code again when stating, in pertinent part, "why was the LDC not followed as it was understood when placing accessory structures **on the code facilities lot**? Yet in my case I have received 2 phone calls asking for the as-built survey and BPR process **from codes**? That's Selective." *See* **Ex. 20**, pgs. 8-9 (emphasis added).

In response, Commissioner Curry was informed by Mr. Kellenberger that, "[t]his has been addressed. LTM's or Planning Director approvals forthcoming on structures that were not permitted correctly at the Code compliance Facility and Bch Ops Facility." *See* **Ex. 20**, pg. 9. Nevertheless, in a Facebook post dated Apil 21, 2026, Commissioner Curry stated, in response to the fifth allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint, "5. Yes, I did as a commissioner, I'm pretty sure I'm allowed to have access to the property, but I still have not been given a code. So yes, I did take photos of LDC violations according to the LDC on the South End code compliance compound." *See* **Ex. 59**.

By his own admission in his February 9, 2026 email, Commissioner Curry's outspoken criticism of Code as it relates to potential LDC violations at the Code building is based on is "**own personal experiences**." *See* **Ex. 19**. Commissioner Curry only raised these concerns after the Curry Code Case where Code found LDC violations on his property (**Ex. 4**) and after the Granted Curry Variance was finalized on January 14, 2026 (**Ex. 33**). Thus, evidence suggests Commissioner Curry made these complaints in retaliation against Code and possibly even Planning, after the Curry Code Case and Granted Curry Variance.

v. There is no evidence of retaliation and/or a hostile work environment related to Commissioner Curry's relationship with the Hollands.

The sixth allegation in Mr. Gainey's ethics complaint is that, *"[o]ne thing Commissioner Curry had to do to come into compliance with his code case was move his shed that is in his backyard. Commissioner Curry posted pictures of the "Hollands" helping him move his shed. The Hollands have an open Code case now, and after Code went out to the Hollands' property to look for violations, Commissioner Curry requested a meeting with Code and County officials, with the Hollands. I believe this maybe an attempt to manipulate how the Hollands' code case is handled*." *See* **Ex. 24**.

In a Facebook post dated April 21, 2026, Commissioner Curry stated, in pertinent part in response to the sixth allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint, "6. Yes, the hollands did help me move my shed but let's add a little more to this. I was not aware that Mr. Gainey had filed an ethics complaint but yet the county admin know as well.Mr. [sic] Gainey should have been excused from that meeting but it was allowed by the county admin to partake in said meeting. Seems like maybe a set up to me (just my opinion)..." *See* **Ex. 59**. Commissioner Curry made these same complaints in an email dated March 9, 2026, March 10, 2026, and March 27, 2026 (**Ex. 25**) and in an additional Facebook post on April 21, 2026 (**Ex. 58**).

To address Mr. Gainey's concern, and as discussed in further detail in **Section III(C)(15)** below, Commissioner Curry likely has not overstepped in his role as Commissioner by being involved in the Hollands'/the Horse Power Pavillion's Code case because evidence suggests Commissioner Curry was appointed by the BCC to serve as a liaison between the County and the Hollands regarding their ongoing issues with the County. However, because of Commissioner Curry's repeatedly self-proclaimed close personal relationship with the Hollands, acceptance of discounted services from the Hollands, etc., it would seem appropriate for Commissioner Curry to consider recusing himself from voting on or otherwise having an influence on any decisions the County or BCC may make regarding the Hollands moving forward. Commissioner Curry has consistently posted about the Hollands and the Horse Power Pavillion on Facebook. ***See*** **Ex. 27** pgs. 3-6**; Exs. 27-31, 42, 52; Vid. Exs. H, N.** While there are valid concerns related to Commissioner Curry's relationship with the Hollands, there is no evidence to suggest Commissioner Curry's relationship with the Hollands is retaliatory or subjected any County employees to a hostile work environment**.**

Commissioner Curry has taken issue with the fact that Mr. Gainey[86] attended a February 2026 meeting with the Hollands. *See* **Ex. 25**. Such complaint has no bearing on the allegations contained in the Ethics Complaint; however, Commissioner Curry is likely justified in raising this concern. At the time of the meeting, Mr. Gainey and Mr. Kellenberger both knew Mr. Gainey had filed his Ethics Complaint. Although Mr. Kellenberger stated he could not inform Commissioner

[86] Commissioner Curry did not make a similar complaint regarding Mr. Cornman, who was also present at the meeting with the Hollands after filing his Ethics Complaint in February 2026.

Curry of the Ethics Complaint until Commissioner Curry received the official paperwork from the Ethics Commission, Administration and/or HR likely should have instructed Mr. Gainey to sit out of the meeting in light of his Ethics Complaint and because his attendance was not absolutely necessary. However, there is no evidence to substantiate Commissioner Curry's allegation that this was a "set up" or was otherwise done in an effort to harm Commissioner Curry. *See* **Ex. 59**.

vi. Commissioner Curry's March 5, 2026 Facebook video and overall social media commentary regarding Code is likely retaliatory. Commissioner Curry has likely created a hostile work environment for Mr. Gainey after posting Mr. Gainey's personal information and Ethics Complaint on Facebook and has likely created a hostile work environment for Code generally as a result of his ongoing social media activity. However, it was not inherently improper for Commissioner Curry to post Mr. Gainey's personal information online because Mr. Gainey did not complete the requisite steps to maintain the exemption provided by Fla. Stat. § 119.071(4)(d)2.a.

On March 5, 2026, Commissioner Curry posted an almost 22-minute Facebook video addressing the allegations contained in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint. *See* **Vid. Ex. N**. This video, in and of itself, was likely retaliatory against Mr. Gainey, who is protected by Florida Statute and Policy pursuant to Florida Statute § 112. *See* **Ex. 7**, § 112.3187, *Fla. Stat*. Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint is a protected, whistleblower disclosure, and pursuant to Policies and Florida Statute, "there shall be no punishment, retaliation, or any other type of discrimination for reporting problems. No employee who, in good faith, reports a violation of the Code of Ethics shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequence…" *See* **Ex. 6**, *Policy 2.17*; **Ex. 7**, § 112.3187, *Fla. Stat*. In the March 5, 2026 video, Commissioner Curry goes through Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint line by line discussing the allegations against him, making light of the situation and even admitting some of the allegations are true. Commissioner Curry made many flippant comments including but not limited to, "guilty, guilty, double guilty" and "item six is a good one yall, get your popcorn out." *See* **Vid. Ex. N**. Commissioner Curry also mentioned Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint in a video posted on April 20, 2026. *See* **Vid. Ex. Q**. Additionally, on March 7, 2026, Commissioner Curry posted a copy of Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint on Facebook. *See* **Ex. 54**. In his (second) March 27, 2026 interview, Commissioner Curry stated he posted Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint on Facebook because he thought it was "ridiculously dumb."

On March 7, 2026, Mr. Gainey emailed Administration and HR with his concerns regarding his whistleblower protection. *See* **Ex. 23**, pg. 11. After Commissioner Curry made this post, on March 19, 2026, Mr. Gainey filed additional information with the Ethics Commission. Mr. Gainey stated, "I believe Commissioner Curry released my private information to the public maliciously, as retaliation from my ethics complaint. I believe Commissioner Curry was attempting to intimidate me, harass me and get revenge on me because of my complaint against him. I believe Commissioner intentionally violated my privacy." *See* **Ex. 24**, pg. 8.

Mr. Gainey stated his personal information and home address[87] remained on Facebook until that next Monday, and having his personal information and home address published online impacted him and his family in regard to their safety because of his prior role with the WCSO.

Although Commissioner Curry's actions were retaliatory in nature, it was not inherently improper for Commissioner Curry to disclose Mr. Gainey's personal information because evidence suggests Mr. Gainey did not take the requisite steps to have his information protected as it relates specifically to the Ethics Complaint. On March 19, 2024, Mr. Gainey executed a Walton County Board of County Commissioners Exemption from Public Disclosure form (the "County Exemption Form") requesting for his address and personal information to be held in confidence by the County pursuant to applicable sections of Florida Statute § 119. *See* **Ex. 23**, pgs. 15-16. While this document is sufficient to protect Mr. Gainey's information from being disclosed by the County[88], this document does not protect Mr. Gainey's information from being disclosed by any other entity or agency, including the Ethics Commission. The undersigned has not seen any evidence of Mr. Gainey completing the Florida Commission on Ethics Public Records Exemption Request form (**Ex. 67**) (the "Ethics Commission Exemption Form"). The Ethics Commission Exemption Form must be completed to maintain confidentiality pursuant to Florida Statute § 119.071(4)(d)3.a, which states, in pertinent part, "An agency… must maintain the exempt status of that information only if the officer… submits a written and notarized request for maintenance of the exemption to the custodial agency." *See* **Ex. 7**, § 119.071(4)(d)3. *Fla. Stat*. Because Mr. Gainey did not complete the Ethics Commission Exemption Form, the Ethics Commission was not required to redact or otherwise protect Mr. Gainey's personal information, and accordingly it was not in and of itself improper for Commissioner Curry to post the information online.

Notwithstanding, both the March 5, 2026 video and March 7, 2026 post were likely retaliatory against Mr. Gainey and subjected Mr. Gainey to a hostile work environment. Mr. Gainey made a protected report against Commissioner Curry and in direct response, Commissioner Curry vilified Mr. Gainey online. Commissioner Curry's retaliatory behavior is the exact behavior Policies seek to protect County employees from.

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[87] Commissioner Curry later reposted Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint with his personal information redacted. For purposes of this Investigation, all Exhibits have been redacted to remove Mr. Gainey's personal information pursuant to Florida Statute § 119.071(4)(d)2.a. It is undisputed that Commissioner Curry posted Mr. Gainey's personal information and home address online without any redactions.

[88] It is unclear if Commissioner Curry, as a Commissioner, would be responsible for adhering to the County Exemption Form as such form would be related to the day-to-day operations of the County. Regardless, the Ethics Commission, not Commissioner Curry, is the agency responsible for adhering to applicable Florida Statutes related to the Ethics Complaint. Thus, it was not inherently improper for Commissioner Curry to post Mr. Gainey's information online, subject to the analysis herein regarding retaliatory behavior, generally, because the Ethics Cmmission had no duty to protect such information.

Moreover, Commissioner Curry's general social media activity regarding Code is likely retaliatory in nature and has created a hostile work environment for Code employees. Nearly all County employees interviewed noted Commissioner Curry's social media posts and described them as antagonistic and retaliatory in nature. *See* **Exs. 27, 41, 42, 45, 47, 49- 53, 55, 57; Vid. Exs. E, F, I, J, M-O, Q, R.**

By way of example, on March 6, 2026, after receiving Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint, Commissioner Curry posted a copy of his March 10, 2026 BCC meeting agenda item which stated, "Codes Discussion with possible motions. Selective Enforcement discussion, Body Cam policy, Code Enforcement Vehicles (count and policy), Fines past and present Update, FTE shift information as well as anything else the conversation may lead into." *See* **Ex. 34**. On the Facebook post itself, Commissioner Curry wrote, "[i]f any of my agenda items below interest you please attend the meeting on Tuesday and share your thoughts and experiences during public comment if no motions are made. See ya Tuesday." *See* **Ex. 53**. This post was likely retaliatory against Code as it was likely in direct response to Commissioner Curry's personal grievances with Code, including but not limited to the Ethics Complaints against him and the Curry Code Case.

Furthermore, encouraging the general public to come to a meeting and air out their "thoughts and experiences" with Code after receiving an Ethics Complaint regarding the same subject matter likely created a hostile work environment for Code employees and disrupted Code employees' work environment as a whole. Commissioner Curry stated he took Legal's advice to take the post down, but that he was planning to bring up selective enforcement, emails concerning the anonymous complaint issue, and violations in the surrounding perimeter around his house. Commissioner Curry claimed he had no intent to intimidate Code by inviting people that have ever had any issues with Code to the BCC meeting; however regardless of his intentions, this public call out of Code likely *did* intimidate Code employees and *did* create a hostile work environment for Code. There is likely no other expected outcome from this Facebook post other than to punish Code employees. While it may be typical for Commissioners to encourage the general public to attend meetings or even to speak up regarding maters they feel passionate about, encouraging a narrative of this nature is seemingly retaliatory given the totality of the circumstances.

Another specific example is Commissioner Curry's public disparagement of Code related to yard sale signs. On November 24, 2025, the BCC, including Commissioner Curry, voted 5-0 to reinstate Code's ability to enforce the County's scenic corridor standards. *See* **Ex. 35**. Accordingly, Code resumed its duties, including removing snipe signs out of the right of way on the scenic corridors. Apparently, on or around February 28, 2026, after a Code Officer removed yard sale signs from the scenic corridor of Highway 98 during a Saturday shift, a citizen called the Code office and complained that his yard sale signs had been picked up. *See* **Ex. 21**, pg. 5. Following this incident, Commissioner Cury began posting online about yard sale signs, including making cartoon images criticizing Code. *See* **Ex. 27**, pg. 20; **Ex. 52**; *see also* **Ex. 27**, pg. 23 ("Hey don't tell anyone but we are having a yard sale and this is out sign…Shhhhhhhhhhhh"). Commissioner Curry also posted a Facebook video about snipe signs on April 21, 2026, stating he would return signs to their owners. *See* **Vid. Ex. R**.

When asked about his social media posts regarding Code and yard sale signs (*see* posts immediately below this paragraph), Commissioner Curry stated there was a post on social media about Code picking up yard sale signs in the right of way on a Saturday morning, which he thought was selective because he sees realtor and pressure washing signs placed in the right of way, but Code was only picking up yard sale signs. Notably, Commissioner Curry stated he did not see the particular right of way that Code removed the signs from. Commissioner Curry said he made a character[89] that says "marked myself safe from yard sale signs" and he even held his own yard sale and took a picture of himself having the yard sale. When asked about the BCC voting on scenic corridor standards and Commissioner Curry's vote in favor of such motion, Commissioner Curry stated he does not disagree that there is a policy on signs in the scenic corridor, but if Code is going to pick up one set of signs they need to pick them all up, however, as stated above, Commissioner Curry said he did not see the particular right of way that Code removed the signs from. Commissioner Curry likely intentionally targeted Code and criticized them online for doing the exact activity he voted in favor of at the November 2,4 2025 BCC meeting. This behavior is thus likely retaliatory and likely creates a hostile work environment.

(**Ex. 27**, pg. 20; **Ex. 52**); (**Ex. 47**)

[89] This is a cartoon image that was posted to Commissioner Curry's Facebook account. *See* **Ex. 52**.

(**Ex. 28**, pg. 5)

Commissioner Curry has made other unfavorable comments against Code on Facebook such as posting a picture of a flag and stating, "I'm sure a code violation will be coming my way. Lol." (**Ex. 27**, pg. 2); has posted several cartoon images directly referring to Code (**Exs. 27, 28, 52, 47**); and has posted numerous videos airing out his personal grievances with both Code and Planning. *See* **Vid. Exs. E, F, I-R**. Commissioner Curry also posted a screenshot of his email to HR and Legal which he stated, "…I personally have ZERO faith in our codes Dept from my own personal experiences.." *See* **Ex. 27**, pg. 37. Commissioner Curry has also been outspoken on Facebook regarding the County processes he had to go through related to the Curry Code Case, Curry Variance Application and Granted Curry Variance. *See* **Ex. 27**, pgs. 3, 8, 11-13, 17- 19, 32, 33. Commissioner Curry seemingly aims to retaliate against Code by continuing to publicly condemn the Department on Facebook, which has likely created a hostile work environment.

vii. Evidence suggests Commissioner Curry likely intimidated Mr. Gainey with his pistol.

During this Investigation Mr. Gainey alleged that during a pre-BCC meeting at Commissioner Curry's office with Commissioner Curry, Mr. Cornman, and Mr. Gainey, Commissioner Curry pulled his pistol out and placed it on the table in front of him, somewhat pointed towards Mr. Gainey. Mr. Gainey stated it made him feel uncomfortable, and that he believed Commissioner Curry knew Mr Gainey did not like it, and that Commissioner Curry did it as intimidation. Mr. Cornman recounted the same events in his interview.

In response, Commissioner Curry stated that as far as he knows he can carry in County buildings, and that it is common for him to take his pistol off his waist and put it on the desk or table in front of where he is sitting. Commissioner Curry stated if Mr. Gainey and Mr. Cornman came into his office he may not have realized it was on the table, and he did not think it was an

issue coming from ex-police (Mr. Gainey). None of the witnesses were able to determine the exact date this took place, but evidence suggests it occurred after the initiation of the Curry Code Case.

The undersigned is unable to substantiate whether Commissioner Curry purposely placed his pistol in front of Mr. Gainey in an effort to intimidate Mr. Gainey, however evidence suggests Mr. Gainey *was* intimidated by this action, which could have created a hostile work environment. In response, the undersigned suggests for all County employees and Commissioners to review applicable Policies and laws regarding open carry requirements, and to operate with heighted caution when carrying firearms so as to not cause unnecessary intimidation of others.

viii. Commissioner Curry's recent inquiry into Code budgets and other specific information appears retaliatory in nature.

During interviews, Commissioner Curry stated he was working to get the costs of the County vehicles for staff (in Code), and Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry had been questioning Code's policies on driving County vehicles home. In and around March and April 2026, Commissioner Curry began to ask Administration and HR questions regarding Code vehicles and other specific information related to Code. In an email dated March 31, 2026 with the subject line, "Code concerns," Commissioner Curry stated:

> Why are there more code vehicles in the parking lot at the Freeport complex during the day than at night? I'm assuming, we have a lot of folks taking these cars home, so has there been an audit of this process?, if not why? I have folks calling me and asking me why do they see code vehicles driving around at night in locations north of the bay, great question, why?

See **Ex. 20**, pg. 9. Also on March 31, 2026, Commissioner Curry sent an email with the subject line, "Internal Audit / records request" requesting, "an audit type report showing that this 2.4 Policy is being adhered to as well as the pay code 900 being used-Auto use on their bi-weekly time sheet… I see a lot of vehicles driving around after hours and on weekends… So, it appears half of the codes dept fleet is on this program with the following as the reason. 19 or 20 officers… As I've been told before we only have 2 or 3 code officers on a second shift which is at the south end, so why do I see so many out and about after hours driving around in other areas?" *See* **Ex. 20**, pg. 20. In this email, Commissioner Curry also asked for the "number of employees in the codes dept? Staff, Officers and pay / salaries?" *See* **Ex. 20**, pg. 20. In another email on April 2, 2026, Commissioner Curry stated:

> If we can't answer why code is driving around at night when there are no working shifts or emergencies at that time to constitute as such maybe it's time we audit trips / mileages? With the private industry there are pre trip and post trip reports that provide odometer readings or better yet look into a gps system / software like many other counties utilize, such as Pasco, Sarasota and others. I've reached out to several counties for information to

better compare what Walton has vs other counties that even have 7 times our population doing it with less and holding waste , fraud and abuse in check. Just my thoughts.

See **Ex. 20**, pg. 7.

On April 20, 2026, Mr. Cornman also reported what he believed were "retaliatory false" allegations by Commissioner Curry regarding a check that had been delivered to the Code office. *See* **Ex. 26**, pgs. 80-84. This was in response to an email Commissioner Curry sent on April 15, 2026 which stated, "Yes especially when I was sent a photo of the check dated prior to the BCC meeting (yet it was stated they haven't paid yet and no one corrected that not even the **deputy code** admin that was n [sic] attendance) yet it was **laying on someone's desk in codes. How long was it sitting there? Why was it not in the bank? I have lots of questions**." *See* **Ex. 26**, pg. 83 (emphasis added). On April 20, 2025, Mr. Cornman sent an email to Melissa Thompson, Legal and Administration to, "to correct some inaccurate information and false claims that were made about the Code Department and its staff concerning the recent payment…" *See* **Ex. 26,** pgs. 80-81.

On April 29, 2026, Commissioner Curry posted a spreadsheet on Facebook titled, "Codes Comparisons" which seemingly compares the County's Code information to other counties in Florida. *See* **Ex. 63**. This spreadsheet indicates Code takes 20 of its 42 vehicles home. The Facebook post itself states, in pertinent part, "After the BCC meeting yesterday a couple folks wanted to see what info I was researching on my direction to get a quote on a Forensic and or a Operations (DOGE) type audit performed on each dept…Also, the take home vehicle count under Walton doesn't appear to include the Director or deputy director vehicles being taken home was not sent the info on that. Added / updated info for this particular study. 11 seasonal employees, 40 Full Time with a combined salary total of $2,780.098.72 not including benefits." *See* **Ex. 63**.

On April 29, 2026, Mr. Cornman emailed HR with the subject line, "Formal Concern: Continued Workplace Hostility and Retaliation - Commissioner Curry." *See* **Ex. 60**. In this email Mr. Cornman stated, in pertinent part, "I am writing to formally document and report a continued pattern of retaliatory and harassing behavior by Commissioner Dan Curry. This most recent incident occurred during the April 28, 2026, Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting. During his presentation regarding a per-department budget request, Commissioner Curry specifically targeted the Code Department again, make comparisons of our budget and staffing levels to those of neighboring counties… It is our position that this request is not a routine exercise in fiscal oversight but another targeted act of retaliation fand intimidation following his personal code violation case. This behavior is consistent with his clear pattern of intimidation and hostility directed toward myself and my staff over the past several months. Furthermore, it is deeply concerning that county staff and public resources are being utilized to facilitate what appears to be a personal grievance…" *See* **Ex. 60**.

On April 30, 2026, Commissioner Curry made a public records request for, "all the salaries / hourly pay for the codes dept to continue with my budget comparison exercise." *See* **Ex. 61**.

Commissioner Curry also stated he would be requesting similar information for other Departments, but there is no evidence to suggest Commissioner Curry has made those requests. *See* **Ex. 61**. Commissioner Curry has also posted on Facebook about Code Vehicles. *See* **Ex. 57**; **Ex. 28**, pg. 7; **Vid. Ex. Q**.

Although Commissioner Curry claims he will be requesting similar information for other Departments (**Ex. 61**), to the best of the undersigned's knowledge, he has not yet done so, and it appears Commissioner Curry is using Code as an example as a case study on County Departments' budgets and vehicle use. While Commissioner Curry's inquiries appear legitimate when considered as a standalone event, when viewed cumulatively and in the context of this Investigation, Commissioner Curry's inquiries are likely retaliatory in nature. Notably, the County's website lists twenty-one (21) different County Departments.[90] Commissioner Curry choosing to single out Code out of all the other Departments appears retaliatory when considering the Copeland and Curry Code Cases and the subject matter of this Investigation. Evidence suggests Commissioner Curry has continued to single-out and criticize Code as a result of his personal grievances.

ix. There is no evidence to suggest Commissioner Curry became materially involved in the Buddy Burgess /Jim Holloway Investigation.

The fourth allegation in Mr. Gainey's ethics complaint is that, "*Commissioner Curry became involved in a Code Compliance personnel case that had been dealt with approximately a year earlier and was investigated by HR and the County Administrator at that time. This matter has been dealt with and moved on from, but Commissioner Curry has requested that it be reinvestigated by an outside agency, which I feel is retaliation.*" *See* **Ex. 24**.

In a Facebook post dated Apil 21, 2026, Commissioner Curry stated, in pertinent part and in response to the fourth allegation in Mr. Gainey's Ethics Complaint, "4. I did not request the investigation to the Hollaway [sic] case…" *See* **Ex. 59**. However, Mr Gainey and Mr. Cornman both alleged in their interviews that Commissioner Curry was responsible for the investigation of the dispute between Buddy Burgess and Jim Holloway. Commissioner Curry stated he did not remember asking anyone to look into this dispute. Evidence suggests that Commissioner Curry may have offered public commentary on the dispute between Buddy Burgess and Jim Holloway, but Commissioner Curry did not influence Administration's decision to investigate the dispute. In fact, Mr. Kellenberger specifically stated Commissioner Curry's public commentary on the matter had no influence on his decision to ask for an investigation. Accordingly, the undersigned has determined there is no retaliatory behavior associated with this allegation.

[90] https://www.mywaltonfl.gov/819/Departments

x. Overall morale has been negatively impacted by Commissioner Curry creating a hostile work environment due to retaliatory behavior.

Commissioner Curry's actions have undoubtedly impacted employee morale in Code and have also impacted other County Departments including Planning. Mr. Gainey, Mr. Cornman, Ms. Hicks and Ms. Jefferies all commented on how Commissioner Curry's actions have impacted Code employees. Specifically, statements included, but are not limited to: (i) Code Officers are stressed out and anxious about being assigned to cases Commissioner Curry is involved in; (ii) Commissioner Curry's retaliation against Code is impacting the ability of Code employees to do their jobs; (iii) Code employees are upset about being named in Commissioner Curry's social media posts; (iv) Code Officers do not want to be assigned to anything related to Commissioner Curry because they know their name will end up on Facebook; (v) Commissioner Curry has created morale issues in the Code office; (vi) Commissioner Curry's public criticism has directly impacted Code employees' ability to do their jobs; (vii) some Code Officers have reported that during recent Code inspections, homeowners have started to take their phones out and film the Code officers, claiming they are going to send the footage to Commissioner Curry[91].

Evidence suggests Commissioner Curry's impact on Code has also been experienced from HR's perspective and has impacted other Departments. Mr. Franxman stated there has been a struggle to fill positions in Code and people have quit because they are tired of Commissioner Curry's social media posts making Code appear incompetent. Mr. Franxman stated a young lady left (Code) four (4) or five (5) months ago, in addition to others. Mr. Franxman stated in his experience when it comes to hiring and selecting for positions in Code, staff have reported they do not want to work for Code because of Commissioner Curry. Mr. Franxman also stated two (2) to three (3) Department Directors have approached him stating they are concerned about Commissioner Curry's behavior and they feel they will be retaliated against if they do not do what Commissioner Curry wants them to do, or that he will "grill them" or post information about them on social media.

Accordingly, the information gathered suggests Commissioner Curry's conduct has had negative effects on County operations extending beyond the underlying disputes, including adverse impacts on employee morale, departmental operations, and perceptions of fairness in County processes. Regardless of intent, when a Commissioner's actions create a reasonable perception of intimidation, retaliation, or misuse of influence, it can undermine employees' ability to perform their duties and erode public confidence. These circumstances underscore the importance of avoiding behavior that could reasonably be perceived as intimidating or retaliatory toward County employees.

[91] Ms. Jefferies stated this occurred with four (4) different homeowners following Commissioner Curry's public criticism of Code.

B. County Policies Addressing Commissioner Curry's Actions

The County has established Policies to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all employees to best serve the public interest. Specifically, the Policies state, **"[t]he Walton County BCC** and all within their employment **shall comply with all state and federal EEO statutes and regulations**." *See* **Ex. 6**, *Section I* (emphasis added). The Policies also specifically require compliance with Florida Statute § 112 quoting the statutory language stating, "It is declared to be the policy of the state that **public officers** and employees, state and local, are agents of the people and hold their positions for the benefit of the public. They are bound to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the State Constitution and to **perform efficiently and faithfully their duties under the laws of the federal, state, and local governments**. **Such officers** and employees **are bound to observe**, in their official acts, **the highest standards of ethics consistent with this code** and the advisory opinions rendered with respect hereto regardless of personal considerations, recognizing that promoting the public interest and maintaining the respect of the people in their government must be of foremost concern." *See* **Ex, 6**, *Section I* (emphasis added); **Ex. 7**, § 112.311, *Fla. Stat*. (emphasis added).

Regarding workplace harassment, Policy 2.10 states the, "Walton County BCC shall not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any employee that harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another employee's work performance or that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment." *See* **Ex. 6**, *Policy 2.10*. Policy 2.17 relates specifically to retaliation and whistleblower protection pursuant to Florida Statutes §§ 112.3187 and 112.31895. *See* **Ex. 6**, *Policy 2.17*. Applicable portions of Policy 2.17 state, "anyone who has reason to believe the Walton County BCC is violating or not complying with state or federal statutes, rules or regulations is encouraged to report the concern to their department leadership, County Administration, any County Commissioner, or the HR Department. **There shall be no punishment, retaliation, or any other type of discrimination for reporting problems. No employee who, in good faith, reports a violation of the Code of Ethics shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequence**…This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within the Walton County BCC prior to seeking resolution outside the organization." *See* **Ex. 6**, *Policy 2.17* (emphasis added).

In the undersigned's opinion, Commissioner Curry's actions following the Curry Code Case as detailed above can fairly be described as retaliatory. Commissioner Curry's conduct has disrupted and interfered with Code employees and as a Department and has created a hostile work environment. *See* **Ex. 6**, *Policy 2.10*. Moreover, in response to the Ethics Complaints, Commissioner Curry publicly disparaged Code and inappropriately addressed allegations from the Ethics Complaint. *See* **Ex. 54**. This is seemingly the type of conduct the Policies seek to prevent.

Despite County employees repeatedly reporting and complaining of improper actions by Commissioner Curry, an unresolved question is whether Commissioners are subject to the County's Policies that would be implicated by such complaints. Mr. Kellenberger stated in some cases they are (Commissioners required to follow Policies), such as where the Policies address a

Commissioner's aide or tuition reimbursement. Mr. Franxman stated the County's rules are not specific as to the applicability of County Policies to Commissioners, and while Commissioners are referred to in the Policies, the Policies do not direct Commissioners regarding daily operations or general Policies like harassment and retaliation.

On September 4, 2015, at the request of the Office of the State Attorney, a grand jury[92] issued a Report in the context of reviewing certain operations and policies of the County (the "Grand Jury" and the "2015 Grand Jury Report"). *See* **Ex. 36**. Among other findings, the Grand Jury noted, "every person in County government should strictly adhere to the policies of the Human Resources Department…" *See* **Ex. 36**. While the Policies do not specifically or explicitly state Commissioners are required to adhere to the Policies, the 2015 Grand Jury Report at least indicated they should.

Another obstacle brought to light in the course of this Investigation is the County's lack of recourse to address County employee complaints of retaliation and/or hostile work environment against Commissioners. Apparently, even in cases where County Commissioners retaliate against County employees and/or create a hostile working environment, the County has no mechanism to discipline such Commissioner as it would non-elected County employees. Mr. Kellenberger stated the complaints against Commissioner Curry regarding retaliation against Code employees put him in a tough position because there is no disciplinary action that can be taken against an elected official. Mr. Franxman also stated the County does not have a mechanism (to handle the complaints) through the HR process. Mr. Franxman also stated there has been pushback from the Ethics Commission that the Ethics Commissioner cannot handle retaliation claims and that those claims come back to the County/HR. While the County has clear Policies on how to address employee v. employee allegations, the County does not currently have policies or procedures to address employee v. Commissioner allegations.

Accordingly, the undersigned recommends for the County to explore its ability to adopt policies and procedures, in accordance with applicable Florida law, to create a reporting mechanism to address County employee allegations against Commissioners to the extent that is possible.

[92] A grand jury is an independent investigative body which, "shall inquire into every offense triable within the county for which any person has been held to answer,… and all other indictable offenses triable within the county that are presented to it by the state attorney or her or his designated assistant or otherwise come to its knowledge. *See* Fla. Stat. § 905.16. In the civil context, a grand jury's duty is to inquire into matters affecting any county, including but not limited to county commissions.

14) Evidence suggests Commissioner Curry likely subjected Mr. Baronti to a hostile work environment while working on the Curry Variance Application, which was somewhat resolved when Mr. Baronti requested to be removed from the Curry Variance Application. Notwithstanding, evidence also suggests that while Commissioner Curry had negative attitude regarding the variance process, generally, his conduct did not rise to the level of retaliation and/or a hostile work environment towards other Planning employees.

Throughout this Investigation it was alleged that some County employees outside of Code also experienced what they described as hostile treatment from Commissioner Curry. Specifically, Mr. Baronti, the Senior Planner in Planning responsible for variance applications, alleged Commissioner Curry subjected him to a hostile work environment while working on the Curry Variance Application. Following a dispute between Commissioner Curry and Mr. Baronti that occurred in or around November 2025, Mr. Baronti reported his concerns to HR and an investigation was conducted. *See* **Ex. 62**. While HR's exact findings of that investigation are not abundantly clear, Mr. Franxman stated Mr. Baronti was upset and felt intimidated by Commissioner Curry. Mr. Baronti stated he was told by HR that he did nothing wrong. Regardless, evidence suggests that Commissioner Curry was likely antipathetic in his interactions with Mr. Baronti and possibly other Planning employees throughout the process for the Curry Variance Application, and that Commissioner Curry likely subjected Mr. Baronti to a hostile work environment.

Evidence further suggests tensions between Mr. Baronti and Commissioner Curry began when the two worked together on the Curry Variance Application during the pre-application process. *See* **Ex. 62**. Mr. Baronti stated during pre-application meetings Commissioner Curry "balked at" Mr. Baronti's recommendations for the Curry Variance Application. Mr. Baronti stated Commissioner Curry "pitched a fit" about having to get the variance stating that it was "stupid" and that he had emails from Public Works stating he did not have to get a variance.

Notably, Mr. Baronti stated that Commissioner Curry told him that "heads would roll" if Commissioner Curry did not get his variance, and that if he did not get his variance there would "be some changes." Although Commissioner Curry denied specifically saying "heads would roll," he also stated any comment he made would have been in a joking or sarcastic manner. Mr. Baronti reported to HR that after Mr. Baronti advised Commissioner Curry that his variance request did not meet LDC requirements[93], Commissioner Curry responded stating, "apparently you don't like your job." *See* **Ex. 62**. Furthermore, on November 18, 2025, Commissioner Curry stated via email he intended to discuss Mr. Baronti at the November 24, 2025 BCC meeting stating, "[i]t deserves public discussion since Bob felt the need to get loud obnoxious and condescending in public with his "bring it. I only have a year left anyway. " [sic]" *See* **Ex. 26**, pg. 15.

[93] Mr. Baronti stated ninety-nine percent (99%) of Planning staff reports on requested variances recommend a denial of the variance and that the LDC should be followed.

Mr. Schoen stated Mr. Baronti expressed trepidation and anxiety about conversations he had with Commissioner Curry. Mr. Schoen stated Mr. Baronti told him Commissioner Curry was not happy with what Mr. Baronti was requesting, was not happy with the documentation needed for a variance, and that Commissioner Curry was irritated and acting gruff. Additionally, evidence actually suggests that Planning employees were more accommodating to Commissioner Curry throughout the variance process than a typical citizen, including Mr. Baronti, who spent a considerable amount of time at Commissioner Curry's office assisting him with the Curry Variance Application, which is not something done for all variance applicants. *See* **Ex. 62**. Mr. Baronti stated he went to Commissioner Cury's office and spent over three (3) hours with him telling him exactly what to do for his application and in response Commissioner Cury told him it was too burdensome and that he was exempt and should not have to get the variance. Mr. Baronti also stated he showed Commissioner Curry an example of a mail out notices to copy for the ZBA hearing, but that Commissioner Curry did not meet the ZBA hearing notice requirements.

While witness statements suggest both Commissioner Curry and Mr. Baronti possibly could have handled their interactions more professionally, there is no evidence to substantiate Commissioner Curry's claim that Mr. Baronti stated something along the lines of "bring it on, I only have a year left." *See* **Ex. 62**, pgs. 4, 11. Instead, evidence suggests Mr. Baronti merely informed Commissioner Curry that he would handle as many variance applications as possible during the remainder of his employment with the County in response to Commissioner Curry's contention that there were one hundred (100)[94] other non-complaint driveways in the County that required variance applications. Mr. Franxman and Mr. Kellenberger both stated they believed Commissioner Curry made the interaction between he and Mr. Baronti out to be something different than it was. Mr. Baronti stated after Commissioner Curry sent out an email about Mr. Baronti that was also posted to Facebook[95] and after Commissioner Curry allegedly threatened him, he made his report to HR and asked Mr. Schoen to remove him from the Curry Variance Application. *See* **Ex. 62**, pgs. 4, 11. Mr. Baronti informed HR that he was worried Commissioner Curry was going to have him fired or disciplined.

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[94] Evidence presented includes differing numbers of driveways Commissioner Curry alleged were non-compliant with the LDC during this interaction with Mr. Baronti. The actual amount of driveways alleged is not relevant for purposes of this Investigation, and it is likely any such number used was hyperbolic in nature. *See* **Ex. 62**, pg. 3 ("over 1200 driveway permits"); **Ex. 62**, pg. 2 ("over a thousand people that were not in compliance"); **Ex. 20**, pg. 1 ("out of **169 permits** applied for to where only ***128*** are needed **28 of them are not in compliance to include the neighbor across the street** that made the statements under oath at the ZBA hearing, **possibly 66 more may be non-compliant** and 34 on paper show in compliance."); *see also* Commissioner Curry's interview statement that there are "600 cases related to driveways" and "40" non-compliant driveways.

[95] The Facebook post allegedly stated, "[q]uote of the day I heard tonight. "Bring it on I have another year". Customer service of the year award right there."

Policy 2.10 describes "Workplace Harassment" as "conduct by any employee that harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another employee's work performance or that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment." *See* **Ex. 6**, *Policy 2.10*. While Commissioner Curry may not be an "employee" of the County subject to discipline by the County, and the Policies are not explicitly applicable to his conduct as a Commissioner, Commissioner Curry's conduct towards Mr. Baronti was such that it likely created a hostile and intimidating workplace for Mr. Baronti because it seemingly disrupted and/or interfered with Mr. Baronti's job duties, as he requested and was eventually removed from handling the Curry Variance Application. At the time, Mr. Baronti was the only Planning employee handling variance applications, therefore it is likely that Mr. Baronti requesting to be removed from the Curry Variance Application due to Commissioner Curry's actions was disruptive to Planning as a whole. Notwithstanding, evidence suggests the tensions between Commissioner Curry and Mr. Bartoni subsided after Mr. Baronti was removed from the Curry Variance Application, and at that time Mr. Baronti's complaints of a hostile work environment were largely resolved.

With regard to Planning employees other than Mr. Baronti, while evidence suggests Commissioner Curry generally had a negative attitude regarding the Curry Variance Application and the necessity of having to obtain a variance, it is unlikely Commissioner Curry's conduct rose to the level retaliation and/or a hostile work environment towards Planning employees, generally. All witness statements suggest Commissioner Curry was outspoken regarding his dissatisfaction with both Code and Planning and specifically complained about having to obtain the variance and complained about the process of obtaining the variance and the requirements associated therewith. Commissioner Curry reiterated his frustrations in his interview stating any time he walked into Planning he had to pay a fee for something and going through the process opened his eyes on a lot of things. However, there is no evidence to suggest Commissioner Curry expressing these frustrations, generally, subjected any other Planning employees to a hostile work environment.

15) Commissioner Curry has likely not overstepped in his role by engaging in the Hollands'/the Horse Power Pavillion's Code case because evidence suggests Commissioner Curry was specifically appointed by the BCC to serve as a liaison between the County and the Hollands. However, because of Commissioner Curry's self-proclaimed close personal relationship with the Hollands, it would appear problematic for Commissioner Curry to vote on or otherwise have influence on any decisions the County or BCC may make regarding the Hollands. Conversely, it is likely that Commissioner Curry has overstepped in his role by actively involving himself in other ongoing Code cases rather than merely reporting information to Administration.

Throughout this Investigation many County employees have alleged that Commissioner Curry has overstepped in his position as Commissioner by engaging with the Hollands and their business, the Horse Power Pavillion. While some evidence presented raises concerns of potential future issues with Commissioner Curry's relationship with the Hollands, because Commissioner Curry was apparently specifically appointed by the BCC to act as a liaison between the BCC and the Hollands, there is no evidence to support contentions that he has overstepped as a

Commissioner while acting in this capacity. Commissioner Curry stated that the BCC appointed him to be a moderator between the Hollands and the County following the lawsuit that was settled between the parties. As it relates to the meeting Commissioner Curry facilitated between the County and the Hollands in or around February 2026, Commissioner Curry stated the Hollands were having an issue with the County and wanted a meeting, so Commissioner Curry said he would facilitate a meeting and had his aide email several people in the Code, Legal, Administration and Planning Departments to attend the meeting with the Hollands.

Despite his appointment from the BCC, many County employees have expressed concerns regarding Commissioner Curry's involvement with the Hollands. Mr. Kellenberger's position was that County staff should be handling the Hollands' issues, not Commissioner Curry. Mr. Cornman stated Commissioner Curry is involved with the Hollands' Code case because he is very good friends with them and that he frequently posts videos on Facebook with the Hollands, including when the Hollands helped Commissioner Curry move his shed with a piece of equipment Mr. Cornman speculated cost around one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000.00). Mr. Cornman stated that in one of Commissioner Curry's videos, he said the Hollands helped him move his shed for a substantial discount, and that Commissioner Curry had posted pictures of him doing work at the Horse Power Pavillion, including washing dishes. *See* **Exs. 27, 56; Vid. Ex. N, H**. Mr. Cornman stated if Commissioner Curry keeps voting on items for Horse Power, it is a quid pro quo relationship, and Commissioner Curry needs to recuse himself. Mr. Gainey also stated he believed Commissioner Curry was attempting to manipulate how the Hollands' code case is handled.

Despite several County employees' statements, evidence supports Commissioner Curry's contention that he was appointed by the BCC to act in this capacity. Even so, Commissioner Curry's admittedly close relationship with the Hollands may present issues in the future. Commissioner Curry has consistently posted about the Hollands and the Horse Power Pavillion on Facebook. *See* **Ex. 27** pgs. 3-6, 27-31, 42, 52, 56**; Vid. Exs. H, N.** Commissioner Curry himself stated he has a close relationship with the Hollands. Commissioner Curry has also stated sometimes he will bus tables for the Hollands at their restaurant and that the Hollands helped him move his shed on his property. *See* **Ex. 27**, pg. 4-6, 27-31. Commissioner Curry stated the Hollands gave him a family discount to move the shed and that he paid the Hollands $150.00[96] for their help when other movers in the area charge around $300.00.

Under different circumstances, evidence suggests that Commissioner Curry likely has overstepped in his role as Commissioner with other County citizen's Code cases. Similar to the complaints regarding the Hollands, many County employees have raised concerns with Commissioner Curry's seemingly close involvement with various County citizens and their Code cases. *See* **Ex. 29**. Among some statements, Mr. Kellenberger said Commissioner Curry goes live on Facebook in videos involving day-to-day issues of the County. Mr. Franxman stated a County Director came to him because Commissioner Curry told him who to hire and who not to hire, and that Commissioner Curry was getting involved in financial decisions and was meeting with staff regarding operations.

[96] Commissioner Curry stated he would be disclosing the $150.00 discount as a gift.

It is likely that Commissioner Curry has overstepped in his role as Commissioner by engaging in the day-to-day activities of the County, including but not limited to actively involving himself in other ongoing Code cases rather than merely reporting information to Administration. First, it is evident that Commissioner Curry has personal grievances with the Code department related to the Curry Code Case and for having to pay for and submit the Curry Variance Application. For this reason, it is likely best practice for Commissioner Curry to direct issues related to Code directly to Administration, rather than handle them himself. While it is reasonable for a Commissioner to communicate with their constituents regarding issues occurring in their District, it is not appropriate for the Commissioners to engage themselves in day-to-day operations of the County.

Among other findings from the 2025 Grand Jury Report, the Grand Jury found that, "County Commissioners should not be involved in the day-to-day operations of the County." *See* **Ex. 36**, pg. 6.

16) Evidence suggests Commissioner Curry improperly instructed Planning employees to remove a document and public record from the Curry Variance Application, and that Planning employees only acquiesced to this request because of Commissioner Curry's status as a Commissioner.

Throughout the course of this Investigation, it was alleged that Commissioner Curry impermissibly requested for a Planning employee to remove/delete a document from the Curry Variance Application. The document in question is undoubtedly a public record pursuant to Florida Statutes. *See* **Ex. 7,** § 119, *Fla. Stat*. Evidence suggests that Commissioner Curry did, in fact, request for the document to be removed from Planning's system, which was improper.

The document at issue is apparently a survey and/or receipt for a survey that was included in the Curry Variance Application. The undersigned is not able to determine the exact document in question[97], but the Curry Variance Application and associated documents are attached as **Exhibit 22**. It is undisputed that once a document is received by the County, it becomes a public record of the County, and Commissioner Curry himself acknowledged the document at issue was a public document.

Although it is somewhat unclear why Commissioner Curry asked for the document to be removed,[98] evidence suggests Commissioner Curry made an effort to remove a public document

[97] When trying to access the document during the Investigation, Planning was experiencing technical difficulties. Evidence suggests Planning was able to locate the document after it was deleted. Whether the document was recovered does not change the analysis in that a public record was still deleted.

[98] Commissioner Curry stated he was told by Cliff Knauer, who apparently owns a surveying company, that the document needed to list a different company name. Ms. Mazan stated

from the public record when he asked for Planning to replace a document in the Curry Variance Application. Even though statements suggest the document was recovered from Commissioner Curry's pre-application documents, the circumstances presented are still problematic.

Ms. Mazan stated that Commissioner Curry told her he had mistakenly included a document in his Variance Application file, and that he wanted the document deleted from the file and replaced with a new document. Ms. Mazan stated she told Commissioner Curry that Planning did not delete files. Evidence suggests Commissioner Curry was persistent in requesting that the document be deleted, removed, and replaced. Commissioner Curry stated he wanted to replace the document which was "no good" with a different document concerning similar subject matter. Ultimately, the document *was* deleted from the Curry Variance Application.

In the undersigned's opinion, a County Commissioner influencing the removal of a public record/document implicates significant issues and has consequences as outlined in Florida Statute § 119. *See* **Ex. 7,** § 119, *Fla. Stat*. Evidence suggests Planning employees knew it was improper to delete the document, and immediately reported the incident to Mr. Schoen, who instructed the employees to recover the document from a prior source. Mr. Schoen stated removing the document was not appropriate because of rules regarding public records. Ms. Mazan stated she did not question Commissioner Curry because of his authority as a Commissioner. Ms. Mazan stated it is not normal to delete documents and the reason the document was deleted was because it was requested by a Commissioner.

It would seem obvious that a sitting County Commissioner should know that a public document cannot properly be simply removed and thus deleted from a public file. Secondly, a sitting County Commissioner should realize that due to their position and influence, employees may likely do what they are instructed to do when the direction comes from that Commissioner. Accordingly, Commissioners should be cautious in their interactions with County employees to avoid creating the appearance of misusing their position to accomplish objectives that they would not otherwise have the ability to accomplish.

Commissioner Curry requesting for the public record to be deleted and removed from the file subjected the Planning employees to undue pressure and placed the employees in a situation which compromised their professional obligations. Evidence suggests the County employees in this situation felt they had no choice but to delete the document because the request came from a Commissioner. Mr. Schoen stated he understood why Planning staff removed the document - because a Commissioner asked them to do it. All statements suggest that if any other member of the general public would have made the same request, the Planning staff would not have acquiesced.

Commissioner Curry told her that the surveyor who prepared the survey, Cliff [no last name given], did not want his name included in Commissioner Curry's documents.

D. Recommendations

The undersigned has noted several suggestions throughout this Report to provide the County with constructive feedback to ensure best practices are followed throughout the County's operations. Some of these recommendations include, in no particular order:

- To avoid future anonymity issues and ensure compliance with Florida Statutes, Code Officers should apply greater scrutiny to such determinations and more clearly document the basis for treating a complaint as anonymous. *See* **Section III(C)(1)**.
- Commissioners should be cautious when proceeding on personal issues in their capacity as a Commissioner rather than as a citizen and be wary of utilizing access to County resources that members of the general public do not have. *See* **Section III(C)(6)**.
- To resolve any outstanding complaints Commissioner Curry may have regarding the Copeland Code Case and the Copelands' driveway, Code should either (1) provide Commissioner Curry with information supporting why an LDC violation was not noted for the Copelands' driveway or (2) if the Copelands' driveway is not in compliance with LDC requirements, notify the Copelands so they can come into compliance. Notwithstanding, there is no evidence to suggest Code intentionally overlooked any conditions on the Copelands' Property that may not be in compliance with LDC. *See* **Section III(C)(8)**.
- Any non-compliant conditions on County-owned properties should be addressed and brought into compliance with the LDC. *See* **Section III(C)(10)**.
- All County employees and Commissioners should comply with all applicable Policies and laws regarding open carry requirements, and in doing so operate with heighted caution to prevent the unnecessary intimidation of others. *See* **Section III(C)(13)(A)(vii).**
- Commissioner Curry should consider recusing himself from any BCC votes related to the Hollands and/or the Horse Power Pavillion to avoid any appearance of a quid pro quo relationship. *See* **Section III(C)(15)**.
- Commissioner Curry should cease any unwarranted day-to-day involvement in ongoing Code cases and instead direct citizens to Administration or Code to address issues they have with Code or the County to avoid any appearance of impropriety. *See* **Section III(C)(15)**.
- Commissioners should be cautious in their interactions with County employees to avoid creating the appearance of misusing their position to accomplish objectives that they would not otherwise have the ability to accomplish. *See* **Section III(C)(16)**.
- To the extent any documents were deleted from the Curry Variance Application, Planning needs to ensure all public documents are properly restored. *See* **Section III(C)(16)**.

As discussed herein above in **Section III(C)(13)**, one considerable area of potential liability for the County is the lack of redress against Commissioners for complaints regarding Commissioners who retaliate against County employees, create a hostile working environment for County employees, and/or otherwise engage in harassing or disruptive activity.[99] As a preliminary matter, considering the working relationship and dichotomy between Commissioners and County employees, the County should explore any available and legal mechanisms, if any, to bind Commissioners to Policies, as suggested by the 2015 Grand Jury Report. *See* **Ex. 36**. Notwithstanding, the Policies do not currently address how to handle complaints against Commissioners. It is undisputed and widely understood that only the Governor has authority to suspend an elected official from office. *See* **Ex. 39**, Art. IV, § 7, *Fla. Const*. However, this should not prevent the County from attempting to address these issues and protect employees.

To provide the County with a potential mechanism to address employee complaints regarding Commissioner behavior, the County should explore any mechanism to adopt policies and procedures, in accordance with applicable laws, to create a reporting procedure to address these kinds of complaints. Article VIII of the Florida Constitution grants the County[100] the power of self-government as provided by general or special law. *See* **Ex. 39**, Art. VIII, Fla. Const. The BCC, "may enact, in a manner prescribed by general law, county ordinances not inconsistent with general or special law…" *See* **Ex. 39**, Art. VIII, § 1(f), *Fla. Const*. Florida Statute 125 grants the County the authority to "adopt its own rules of procedure" and "perform any other acts not inconsistent with law, which acts are in the common interest of the people of the county, and exercise all powers and privileges not specifically prohibited by law." *See* **Ex. 6**, §§ 125.01(1)(a), (w), *Fla. Stat*.

Various Florida governments have adopted policies and procedures for addressing complaints against Commissioners. Hillsborough County, Florida[101] has adopted a, "Workplace Violence Prevention Policy[102]" (the "Hillsborough Policy"). The purpose of the Hillsborough Policy is to "establish a policy and procedures for the protection from workplace violence for classified and unclassified employees of the Board of County Commissioners, the County Administrator and the County Attorney and elected officials of the Board of County Commissioners." *See* **Ex. 64**. The Hillsborough Policy states, in pertinent part:

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[99] Including harassment for the following reasons: age, race, color, sex, gender expression or orientation, religion, national origin, marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or any other protected status in accordance with the requirements of all federal, state, and local laws. *See* **Ex. 6**, *Policy 2.10*.

[100] Walton County operates as a non-charter government.

[101] Hillsborough County, Florida operates as a charter government, which operates differently than a non-charter government like Walton County. Notwithstanding, their applicable policies serve as a workable example for the County to study.

[102] https://hcfl.gov/policies/board-policy---section-number-07-12-00-00

> Elected officials are subject to Article 4, Section 7 of the Florida Constitution that gives the Governor authority to suspend any County officer for inappropriate conduct or the commission of a felony.
>
> ***
>
> For perpetrators who are…elected officials of the Board of County Commissioners, the results of the investigation will be reduced to a written report and referred to an independent hearing officer obtained by the Director of Human Resources. This hearing officer will give the person accused of violating this policy notice of the allegations and any supporting evidence and an opportunity to respond thereto.
>
> The hearing officer shall make a written report with findings and specific recommendations….For elected officials, the findings and recommendations will be forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners for consideration of referral to the Governor.

See **Ex. 64**.

Moreover, Article V of the City of Defuniak Springs, Florida[103] City Charter[104] is entitled, "Standards of Conduct for Officials." *See* **Ex. 65**. Article V states, in pertinent part:

> All officers, employees, and contractors of the City shall be governed by the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees as provided for in Florida Statutes. In the event that any Charter official, by act or omission, violates a provision of this Charter or an ordinance of the City, the City Council shall have the ability to issue a letter of censure to that official, which shall be required to receive four (4) affirmative votes to pass. The official subject to censure shall have an opportunity to address the City Council prior to vote, however, shall have no vote on the matter. If passed, the letter of censure shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation, be posted at City Hall, and shall be forwarded to the appropriate agencies to determine if the act or omission constitutes a violation of any other provisions of Florida law.

See **Ex. 65**.

In accordance with the Florida Constitution and Florida Statutes, the County should consider enacting available procedures that apply specifically to circumstances where County employees make complaints against Commissioners, and amending the Policies to directly apply

[103] While municipalities differ from counties, the Defuniak Springs, Florida City Charter is another workable example for Walton County to study.

[104] https://www.defuniaksprings.net/1360/City-Charter

to Commissioners, where applicable and allowed by law. Establishing a reporting mechanism will protect County employees and serve as protection to the County from potential liability.

We are available to discuss further and respond to any questions or comments at your convenience.

Sincerely,

David Allen Roberts

APPENDIX A

Applicable Policies Reviewed

i. Walton County Board of County Commissioners Human Resources Policy Manual

(1) Section I, Guiding Principles

The Walton County BCC, believing it to be in the public interest and of most benefit to the employees of the Walton County BCC, has an established policy:

• That fair and equitable treatment of all employees shall be maintained in all areas of personnel matters.

***

• That the public interest shall be best served by having a personnel system that recognizes individual worth and applies objective and equitable policies, procedures, and practices.

***

• The Walton County BCC and all within their employment shall comply with all state and federal EEO statutes and regulations.

***

(2) Section I, Code of Ethics

All Walton County BCC employees shall be aware of, and comply with Section 112:311*, Florida Statutes (6)* which currently provides in part: "It is declared to be the policy of the state that public officers and employees, state and local, are agents of the people and hold their positions for the benefit of the public. They are bound to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the State Constitution and to perform efficiently and faithfully their duties under the laws of the federal, state, and local governments. Such officers and employees are bound to observe, in their official acts, the highest standards of ethics consistent with this code and the advisory opinions rendered with respect hereto regardless of personal considerations, recognizing that promoting the public interest and maintaining the respect of the people in their government must be of foremost concern."

(3) Policy 2.1 – General Conduct

Employees are always expected to conduct themselves in a positive manner to promote the best interests of the Walton County BCC.

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The above examples of impermissible behavior described above are not intended to be an all-inclusive list. At County Administration or the department director's discretion, any violation of the Walton County BCC's policies or any conduct considered inappropriate or unsatisfactory may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of their employment. The Walton County BCC reserves the right to determine the appropriate level of disciple and is not required to proceed through any specific series of action.

(4) Policy 2.10 – Workplace Harassment

It is the policy of the Walton County BCC to promote a productive work environment and the Walton County BCC shall not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any employee that harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another employee's work performance or that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment.

(5) Policy 2.17 – Whistleblower and Retaliation

The Walton County BCC is committed to providing a workplace and citizen service arena in which there is open discussion of operations and practices. Accordingly, anyone who has reason to believe the Walton County BCC is violating or not complying with state or federal statutes, rules or regulations is encouraged to report the concern to their department leadership, County Administration, any County Commissioner, or the HR Department. The report shall be investigated and even if determined not to be misconduct, fraud, or abuse, the individual making the report shall not be retaliated against. There shall be no punishment, retaliation, or any other type of discrimination for reporting problems. No employee who, in good faith, reports a violation of the Code of Ethics shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequence. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within the Walton County BCC prior to seeking resolution outside the organization.

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NOTE: Florida's "Whistle-blower's Act" provides protection against retaliatory action to those reporting information. See F.S. 112.3187 to 112.31895 for detail.

(6) Policy 10.2 – General Provisions

The need for disciplinary action may arise because of different kinds of actions on the part of the employee, such as, but not limited to:

- Failure to perform their job in a satisfactory manner, that is, unsatisfactory performance as to one or more of the requirements of the job
- Infraction of established rules, regulations, policies, and procedures
- Offenses or misconduct which violate general rules of behavior or are specifically prohibited by law

(7) Policy 10.3 – Application of Disciplinary Actions

Certain offenses are of such a serious nature that immediate discharge upon first offense is applicable. Prior to any action to dismiss an employee, the department director shall contact the Director of HR and review that personnel file.

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Incidents of misconduct may differ in individual cases from somewhat similar incidents, and the Walton County BCC retains the right to treat each incident on an individual basis without creating a precedent for cases that arise in the future.

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The HR Department is responsible for providing guidance on the application of disciplinary actions and shall approve all disciplinary actions prior to administering them to the employee.

ii. <u>Walton County Code Compliance Department Policies & Procedures</u>

(1) 03-02 Body Worn Cameras (MAV)

Purpose: The Walton Code Compliance Director's Office has equipped uniformed Code Compliance Officers (CCO) with Mobile Audio/Video (MAV) recording systems to provide records of events and to assist CCO's in the performance of their duties. This policy provides guidance on the use of these systems.

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2.14 Cessation of Recording - Once activated, the MAV system should remain on until the incident has concluded, and/or the CCO has left the scene.

iii. Walton County Land Development Code

(1) § 1.13.06 Post-Development Order and Post-Permit Changes

After a final development order has been issued, it shall be unlawful to change, modify, alter, or otherwise deviate from the terms and/or conditions of the development order, or any permit issued for development, without first obtaining approval of a modification of the development order and/or permit or field order change for minor changes. A modification may be applied for in the same manner as the original permit. A written record of the modification and approval thereof shall be entered upon the original development order and/or permit and shall be maintained in the files of the Planning and Development Services Department.

(2) § 5.0.03 Building Setback Requirements

Table 5-1: Building Setback Requirements

Structure	Front (3)	Side (3)	Rear (3)
Single-family Residential	20 feet	7.5 feet (4)	15 feet
Single Use Multi-family Residential (1-3 Stories)	20 feet	10 feet (1)(2)	20 feet (1)(2)
Single Use Multi-family Residential (4 Stories or More)	20 feet	15 feet (1)(2)	20 feet (1)(2)
All other primary structures (commercial, civic, industrial etc.)	25 feet	10 feet (1)(2)	20 feet (1)(2)

(3) § 5.04.04 Access Management

(B)(5) Driveway access to detached single-family residential uses or short term vacation rental uses in single family residential detached structures shall be from an adjacent public or private street. In the event the property abuts two streets, one point of access is permitted on the street of lower functional classification, as determined by the County Engineer. Single family residential driveways shall be limited to a maximum of 20 feet in width when connecting to a County maintained roadway. Dual one-way access is permitted provided the combined width of the connections do not exceed 20 feet.

(4) § 5.04.06 Right-of-Way Protection

(B)(6)(a) A right-of-way agreement shall be required for any proposed structure, construction, landscaping, fence, or other appurtenance proposed in the County right-of way, approved by the County Engineer and the Board of County Commissioners. If work is done in a County right-of-way, without an executed right-of-way agreement, the County may require the removal of materials at the expense of the persons doing the work in the County right-of-way. Materials placed in the right-of-way without a County executed right-of-way agreement may become the property of the County.

iv. Florida Statute § 112, *et seq*.

(1) Fla. Stat. §§ 112.312(9); (12)(a)(3)-(5)

(9) "Corruptly" means done with a wrongful intent and for the purpose of obtaining, or compensating or receiving compensation for, any benefit resulting from some act or omission of a public servant which is inconsistent with the proper performance of his or her public duties.

***

(12)(a) "Gift," for purposes of ethics in government and financial disclosure required by law, means that which is accepted by a donee or by another on the donee's behalf, or that which is paid or given to another for or on behalf of a donee, directly, indirectly, or in trust for the donee's benefit or by any other means, for which equal or greater consideration is not given within 90 days, including:

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3. Tangible or intangible personal property.
4. The use of tangible or intangible personal property.
5. A preferential rate or terms on a debt, loan, goods, or services, which rate is below the customary rate and is not either a government rate available to all other similarly situated government employees or officials or a rate which is available to similarly situated members of the public by virtue of occupation, affiliation, age, religion, sex, or national origin.

(2) Fla. Stat. §§ 112.313(1) - (2); (4); (6)

(1) DEFINITION. —As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires, the term "public officer" includes any person elected or appointed to hold office in any agency, including any person serving on an advisory body.

(2) SOLICITATION OR ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS.—No public officer, employee of an agency, local government attorney, or candidate for nomination or election shall solicit or accept anything of value to the recipient, including a gift, loan, reward, promise of future employment, favor, or service, based upon any understanding that the vote, official action, or judgment of the public officer, employee, local government attorney, or candidate would be influenced thereby.

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(4) UNAUTHORIZED COMPENSATION.—No public officer, employee of an agency, or local government attorney or his or her spouse or minor child shall, at any time, accept any compensation, payment, or thing of value when such public officer, employee, or local government attorney knows, or, with the exercise of reasonable care, should know, that it was given to influence a vote or other action in which the officer, employee, or local government attorney was expected to participate in his or her official capacity.

***

(6) MISUSE OF PUBLIC POSITION.—*No public officer*, employee of an agency, or local government attorney *shall corruptly use or attempt to use his or her official position* or any property or resource which may be within his or her trust, or perform his or her official duties, *to secure a special privilege, benefit, or exemption* for himself, herself, or others. This section shall not be construed to conflict with s. 104.31[105]. (emphasis added).

(3) Fla. Stat. §§ 112.3187 (1) – (5); (7)

(1) SHORT TITLE. —Sections 112.3187-112.31895 may be cited as the "Whistle-blower's Act."

(2) LEGISLATIVE INTENT. — …It is further the intent of the Legislature to prevent agencies or independent contractors from taking retaliatory action against any person who discloses information to an appropriate agency alleging improper use of governmental office, gross waste of funds, or any other abuse or gross neglect of duty on the part of an agency, public officer, or employee.

(3) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this act, unless otherwise specified, the following words or terms shall have the meanings indicated:

(a) "Adverse personnel action" means the discharge, suspension, transfer, or demotion of any employee or the withholding of bonuses, the reduction in salary or benefits, or any other adverse action taken against an employee within the terms and conditions of employment by an agency or independent contractor.
(b) "Agency" means any state, regional, county, local, or municipal government entity, whether executive, judicial, or legislative; any official, officer, department, division, bureau, commission, authority, or political subdivision therein; or any public school, community college, or state university.

[105] Florida Statute § 104 is titled, "Election Code: Violations; Penalties." Fla. Stat. § 104.31 titled, "Political activities of state, county, and municipal officers and employees" and prohibits the use of official authority or influence to interfere with or influence elections and protects against political coercion.

(c) "Employee" means a person who performs services for, and under the control and direction of, or contracts with, an agency or independent contractor for wages or other remuneration.

(d) "Gross mismanagement" means a continuous pattern of managerial abuses, wrongful or arbitrary and capricious actions, or fraudulent or criminal conduct which may have a substantial adverse economic impact.

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(4) ACTIONS PROHIBITED. —

(a) An agency or independent contractor shall not dismiss, discipline, or take any other adverse personnel action against an employee for disclosing information pursuant to the provisions of this section.

(b) An agency or independent contractor shall not take any adverse action that affects the rights or interests of a person in retaliation for the person's disclosure of information under this section.

***

(5) NATURE OF INFORMATION DISCLOSED. —The information disclosed under this section must include:

(a) Any violation or suspected violation of any federal, state, or local law, rule, or regulation committed by an employee or agent of an agency or independent contractor which creates and presents a substantial and specific danger to the public's health, safety, or welfare.

(b) Any act or suspected act of gross mismanagement, malfeasance, misfeasance, gross waste of public funds, suspected or actual Medicaid fraud or abuse, or gross neglect of duty committed by an employee or agent of an agency or independent contractor.

***

(7) EMPLOYEES AND PERSONS PROTECTED. —This section protects employees and persons who disclose information on their own initiative in a written and signed complaint; …

(4) Fla. Stat. § 112.31895(1)(a)

If a disclosure under s. 112.3187 includes or results in alleged retaliation by an employer, the employee or former employee of, or applicant for employment with, a state agency, as defined in s. 216.011, that is so affected may file a complaint alleging a prohibited personnel action, which complaint must be made by filing a written complaint with the Office of the Chief Inspector General in the Executive Office of the Governor or the Florida Commission on Human Relations, no later than 60 days after the prohibited personnel action.

(5) Fla. Stat. § 112.320

Commission on Ethics; purpose.—There is created a Commission on Ethics, the purpose of which is to serve as guardian of the standards of conduct for the officers and employees of the state, and of a county, city, or other political subdivision of the state, as defined in this part, and to serve as the independent commission provided for in s. 8(f), Art. II of the State Constitution.

v. Florida Statute § 119, *et seq*.

(1) Fla. Stat. § 119.01(1)

It is the policy of this state that all state, county, and municipal records are open for personal inspection and copying by any person. Providing access to public records is a duty of each agency.

(2) Fla. Stat. § 119.011(12)

"Public records" means all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other material, regardless of the physical form, characteristics, or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency.

(3) Fla. Stat. §§ 119.021(1)(a); (b)

Public records shall be maintained and preserved as follows:

(a) All public records should be kept in the buildings in which they are ordinarily used.

(b) Insofar as practicable, a custodian of public records of vital, permanent, or archival records shall keep them in fireproof and waterproof safes, vaults, or rooms fitted with noncombustible materials and in such arrangement as to be easily accessible for convenient use

(4) Fla. Stat. § 119.071(4)(d)2.a

The home addresses, telephone numbers, dates of birth, and photographs of active or former sworn law enforcement personnel or of active or former civilian personnel employed by a law enforcement agency…the names, home addresses, telephone numbers, photographs, dates of birth, and places of employment of the spouses and children of such personnel;…are exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution.

(5) Fla. Stat. § 119.071(4)(d)3.a

An agency that is the custodian of the information specified in subparagraph 2. and that is not the employer of the officer, employee, justice, judge, or other person specified in subparagraph 2. must maintain the exempt status of that information only if the officer, employee, justice, judge, other person, or employing agency of the designated employee submits a written and notarized request for maintenance of the exemption to the custodial agency. The request must state under oath the statutory basis for the individual's exemption request and confirm the individual's status as a party eligible for exempt status.

(6) Fla. Stat. §§ 119.10(1)(a) – (b); (2)(a) – (b)

(1) Any public officer who:

(a) Violates any provision of this chapter commits a noncriminal infraction, punishable by fine not exceeding $500.

(b) Knowingly violates the provisions of s. 119.07(1) is subject to suspension and removal or impeachment and, in addition, commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

(2) Any person who willfully and knowingly violates:

(a) Any of the provisions of this chapter commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

(b) Section 119.105 commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

vi. <u>Florida Statute § 125.01(1)(a) & (w)</u>

(1) The legislative and governing body of a county shall have the power to carry on county government. To the extent not inconsistent with general or special law, this power includes, but is not restricted to, the power to:

(a) Adopt its own rules of procedure, select its officers, and set the time and place of its official meetings.

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(w) Perform any other acts not inconsistent with law, which acts are in the common interest of the people of the county, and exercise all powers and privileges not specifically prohibited by law.

vii. Florida Statute § 162.06(b)

A code inspector may not initiate enforcement proceedings for a potential violation of a duly enacted code or ordinance by way of an anonymous complaint. A person who reports a potential violation of a code or an ordinance must provide his or her name and address to the respective local government before an enforcement proceeding may occur. *This paragraph does not apply if the code inspector has reason to believe that the violation presents an imminent threat to public health, safety, or welfare or imminent destruction of habitat or sensitive resources.* (emphasis added).

viii. The Constitution of the State of Florida

(1) Art. II, §§ 8(f) – (h)

(f)(1) For purposes of this subsection, the term "public officer" means a statewide elected officer, a member of the legislature, *a county commissioner*,…(emphasis added).

***

(g) There shall be an independent commission to conduct investigations and make public reports on all complaints concerning breach of public trust by public officers or employees not within the jurisdiction of the judicial qualifications commission.

(h)

(1) A code of ethics for all state employees and nonjudicial officers prohibiting conflict between public duty and private interests shall be prescribed by law.

(2) *A public officer or public employee shall not abuse his or her public position in order to obtain a disproportionate benefit for himself* or herself; his or her spouse, children, or employer; or for any business with which he or she contracts; in which he or she is an officer, a partner, a director, or a proprietor; or in which he or she owns an interest. The Florida Commission on Ethics shall, by rule in accordance with statutory procedures governing administrative rulemaking, define the term "disproportionate benefit" and prescribe the requisite intent for finding a violation

of this prohibition for purposes of enforcing this paragraph. Appropriate penalties shall be prescribed by law. (emphasis added).

(2) Art. IV, §§ 7(a) – (c)

Suspensions; filling office during suspensions.—

(a) By executive order stating the grounds and filed with the custodian of state records, the governor may suspend from office any state officer not subject to impeachment, any officer of the militia not in the active service of the United States, or any county officer, for malfeasance, misfeasance, neglect of duty, drunkenness, incompetence, permanent inability to perform official duties, or commission of a felony, and may fill the office by appointment for the period of suspension. The suspended officer may at any time before removal be reinstated by the governor.

(b) The senate may, in proceedings prescribed by law, remove from office or reinstate the suspended official and for such purpose the senate may be convened in special session by its president or by a majority of its membership.

(c) By order of the governor any elected municipal officer indicted for crime may be suspended from office until acquitted and the office filled by appointment for the period of suspension, not to extend beyond the term, unless these powers are vested elsewhere by law or the municipal charter.

(3) Art. VIII, § 1(f)

NON-CHARTER GOVERNMENT. Counties not operating under county charters shall have such power of self-government as is provided by general or special law. The board of county commissioners of a county not operating under a charter may enact, in a manner prescribed by general law, county ordinances not inconsistent with general or special law, but an ordinance in conflict with a municipal ordinance shall not be effective within the municipality to the extent of such conflict.